## **Smart Consumer App**

How the mobile app is helping brands connect directly with thousands of consumers across the country as never before Page 16

## Retailer

Competitive pricing and premium positioning has helped L'Opéra make its mark as the authentic French bakery in India Page 34



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**INDIA EDITION** 

Page 47

TEEING UP FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON



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With the festive season coming on, brands and retailers are focusing increasingly on the Millennials and Generation Z respectively. Marketers and advertisers have found that consumer spending and shopper power has steadily been shifting towards the younger generations and away from older folks. like Gen Xers.

Consumer trends consultants acknowledge the young generations' desire for greater convenience in eating, due to busy schedules for work and school, with smaller meals and snacks replacing traditional sit-down eating occasions.

But while the young generations have embraced online shopping, the youths still express an appreciation for the in-store experience. To some grocery shopping is "relaxing," while others say that it's "easier to try new things in person." Other revelations: In choosing brands or products, with prices being comparable, the young generations select items from companies known for being socially or environmentally responsible; packaging is also a purchase influencer. As consumers, these young generations are looking for products and services that mesh with their personal values and identities, including health, communication, consistency, independence and self-improvement.

Going into the festival season, the concerns of the young generations – the most important customer demographic today – should be duly noted and acted upon by brands and retailers.

Amitabh Taneja Editor-in-Chief

## All feedback welcome at editorpgindia@imagesgroup.in

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## PUTTING BEST FOOT FORWARD FOR THE FESTIVE GIFTING SEASON

According to market surveys, there is a 25 per cent increase in the average monthly spend of shoppers on staples and packaged foods during the three months of the festive season (October-December). No surprise that retailers and manufacturers hope to do significantly more business in the festive season and expect better sales traction and consumer connect.

## 16 RETAIL TRENDS

**Empowering shoppers through Smart Consumer App** 



## 18 INSIGHT

The Impatient Consumer, iOT and the Food of Everything



## **30 SUPPLY CHAIN: PALLETS**

**Modern Movement** 



## 34 **RETAILER**

L'Opéra makes its mark as the authentic French bakery in India



## **76 OPINION**

Why don't big businesses 'get' it?



## 82 ORGANIC



## 88 FOOD LABELING

Clean Labels will become a future norm for food brands



## **IN EVERY ISSUE**

## 8 MARKET UPDATE

Government relaxes local sourcing norms for FDI in single brand retail



## 92 WHAT NEXT



Medusa: The new beer brand for millennials



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## Market Update

## Government relaxes local sourcing norms for FDI in single brand retail

The central government has relaxed conditions for single-brand retailers having foreign direct investment (FDI) for complying with the mandatory 30 per cent local sourcing regulations by allowing them to adjust all of their purchases to meet this norm. According to the decision, such entities can now first operate through e-commerce and then open brick-and-mortar stores. The policy earleir required that SBRT (singlebrand retail trading) entities had to operate through brick-and-mortar stores before starting retail trading of that brand through e-commerce. This had created an artificial restriction and was out of svnc with current market practices.

"It has, therefore, been decided that retail trading through online trade can also be undertaken prior to opening of brick-and-mortar stores, subject to the condition that the entity opens brick-and-mortar stores within two years from date of start of online retail," Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said. Online sales will lead to creation of jobs in logistics, digital payments, customer care, training and product skilling, he told reporters after the meeting of the Union Cabinet. Goyal also said the entities would now be able to serve global markets and India will become a global sourcing hub.

Further, to provide greater flexibility and ease of operations to these entities, it has been decided that all procurements made from India shall be counted towards local sourcing, irrespective of whether the goods procured are sold in India or exported. The current cap of considering exports for five years only is also removed, to give an impetus to exports, Goyal said. According to the earlier policy,

only incremental sourcing for global operations was adjusted towards meeting the 30 per cent condition. However, prevalent business models involve not only sourcing from India for global operations by the entity or its group companies, but also through an unrelated third party, done at the behest of the entity undertaking single-brand retail trading or its group companies. "In order to cover such business practices, it has been decided that sourcing of goods from India for global operations can be done directly by the entity undertaking SBRT or its group companies (resident or non-resident), or indirectly by them through a third party under a legally tenable agreement," said Goyal.

An official statement said the requirement of year-on-year incremental increase in exports induces aberrations in the system as companies with lower exports in a base year or any of the subsequent years can meet the current requirements, while a company with consistently high exports gets unduly discriminated against.

Anil Talreja, partner, Deloitte India, said relaxations in the sector were much-awaited. "It has brought goodies for the global retail companies which have been holding on their decisions



Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal



to invest to tap the Indian market," he said. He added that the ancillary sectors, which are pillars to the main retail business, much needed such a relaxation.

"As per the proposal, singlebrand retail companies would now be permitted to open online stores before setting up brick-and-mortar stores. This will help new entrants in particular to initiate their business through the online channel especially since the infrastructure to support on-line is quite well developed now. Allowing the entire value of exports to be allowed for meeting the mandatory 30% local sourcing norms would be a great relief for both existing and new players," said Pinakiranjan Mishra, Partner and Leader, Consumer Products and Retail, EY India.

Following the announcement, Apple, in an official statement, said, "We love our customers in India and we're eager to serve them online and in-store with the same experience and care that Apple customers around the world enjoy. We appreciate the support and hard work by Prime Minister Modi and his team to make this possible and we look forward to one day welcoming customers to India's first Apple retail store. It will take us some time to get our plans underway and we'll have more to announce at a future date."



## Alibaba.com organizes SME-focused workshops across 4 cities

Alibaba.com, the leading wholesale marketplace for global trade under Alibaba Group, recently hosted over 400 SMEs across a series of workshops held across Delhi, Surat, Ahmedabad and Jaipur. The objective of these workshops was to create an understanding of the value proposition of Alibaba.com, talk about the power of e-commerce to local SMEs, thereby enabling them to participate in global markets. Merchants attending these workshops represented a diverse range of categories including timepieces, jewelry, and eyewear, apparel, textiles, leather products and more.

The core proposition of Alibaba.com revolves around onboarding MSMEs and SMEs onto the platform. With over 10 million active buyers from across 200 countries, Alibaba.com provides global access to merchants from across markets and helps them unleash the power of e-commerce for the growth of their businesses. The workshops are on-going engagements from Alibaba.com after the merchants enroll on the platform to guide and up skill them to leveraging the platform to the fullest. The workshops also updated the merchants regarding 'Super September', an annual wholesale focused global shopping bonanza created for small and medium-sized buyers featuring a wide range of products from suppliers across sectors.

On this occasion, Denny Wang, Regional Director, Global B2B Business South Asia, Alibaba.com, said, "Alibaba.com, in line with the group's vision to make it easy to do business

anywhere, has been working in India to enable and empower local SMEs and MSMEs to participate in global markets. Having one of the largest global buyer bases on the platform, we have seen a growing demand for a variety of products from India and with quality manufacturing across many categories, we want merchants to build in India and sell to the world."



Denny Wang, Regional Director, Global B2B Business South Asia, Alibaba.com

According to the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Annual Report, the industry has been contributing significantly to the expansion of entrepreneurial endeavors through business innovations. With this opportunity in the market, Alibaba.com is constantly working towards taking care of the ecosystem by helping local enterprises get more visibility and access to markets beyond India. The report also states that the contribution of Manufacturing MSMEs in the country's total Manufacturing GVO4 (Gross Value of Output) at current prices has also remained consistent at about 33%, i.e. one-third during the last five years.

## Hector Beverages adopts sustainable manufacturing with CleanMax Solar

Indian beverage manufacturer Hector Beverages has partnered with CleanMax Solar - one of the largets providers of solar power and a trusted sustainability partner for corporates – to take the renewable route for its manufacturing facility. Hector Beverages has commissioned a 345.6 kWp rooftop solar plant at its manufacturing unit in Mysuru, Karnataka, which has been set up by CleanMax Solar. The company will be able to generate approximately 523,000 kWh of clean energy annually through the solar rooftop project, abating 430 tonnes of carbon emissions. In addition, the solar rooftop project will enable the company to meet approximately 58 per cent of its power requirement

at a cost that is 30 percent cheaper than prevailing grid electricity tariffs. Furthermore, the company has received approvals for net metering, which will allow it to export surplus solar power to the grid, thereby saving approximately more than INR 11 million on its electricity bills annually.

Hector Beverages markets Paper Boat – a range of healthy Indian ethnic



Neeraj Kakkar, Co-founder & CEO, Hector Beverages

drinks that revives memories of the past. In keeping with its long-term growth plans, the company has now decided to merge organic sourcing with clean energy by adopting solar energy for its manufacturing operations. Neeraj Kakkar, Co-founder & CEO, Hector Beverages, said "This partnership is all about driving positive change in terms of the food and resources we consume. As a brand, we promote naturally procured resources and we would like to extend this to the way our drinks are manufactured. In keeping with this objective, we are proud to partner with CleanMax Solar, an organization which shares these values and provides us with an clean energy solution that allows us to offset the greenhouse gas emissions from our manufacturing

facilities, as part of our broader sustainability commitments."

Speaking about the partnership with Hector Beverages, Andrew Hines, Co-founder, CleanMax Solar said, "This project promises to significantly reduce operating costs for Hector Beverages, through our OPEX model of solar power generation. Moreover, it will further contribute to Hector Beverages' vision of sustainable manufacturing. In a world in which we are already witnessing the effects of climate change firsthand, Hector Beverages is leading the way by demonstrating its commitment to sourcing of natural materials, including energy. We are proud to be associated with Hector Beverages and to have helped them to achieve this important step."





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## FASTag scheme to enable quicker toll payment across highways



In a bid to reduce congestion at toll plazas on national highways, the Government of India is making FASTags mandatory for all vehicles. The FASTag system, once made mandatory, will promote faster movement of vehicles through tolls by digitizing the payments and identifying the vehicles through

these unique tags across the country. FASTag is based on Global Individual Asset Identification (GIAI) coding scheme by GS1 India – with founder members comprising the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

"FASTags would enable all vehicles pay toll fee digitally, while providing convenience of faster movement across toll plazas. FASTags would also enable toll payments across State and district highways and even for parking in cities in the near future. This would help commuters in seamless movement across city parking to State to national highways. Through use of GS1 unique identification numbers for vehicles, which are encoded in FASTags, each vehicle can get identified in a standardised and common manner by different government departments including police, traffic management authorities, insurance, toll collection authorities, and municipal bodies, while in transit", said Ravi Mathur, CEO of GS1 India.

## No job losses yet, says Parle senior category head

Parle Products Pvt. Ltd, a leading Indian biscuit maker, was in the news because of the reported layoff of over 10,000 workers due to the slowing economic growth and falling demand in the rural heartland. Speaking with a TV channel on the job losses issue

and the current scenario, Mayank Shah, Sr. category Head at Parle Products, shared that there's a definite slowdown. He further highlighted that the issue of job losses has been blown out of proportion, which is inappropriate. He said the consumption of a basic INR 5 packet has taken a hit due to a high GST rate, which has affected the overall run.

Shah also mentioned that the sales have declined by 7-8 percent for biscuits below INR 100 per kg, which attracts 18 percent GST. He said low demand and high GST rate will eventually lead to the production slowdown and maybe job cuts. Shah said demand for the popular Parle biscuit brands such as Parle-G had been worsening since India rolled out a nationwide goods and services tax (GST) in 2017, which imposed a higher levy on biscuits costing as low as INR 5 but this shall have no impact on the employment.

## FSSAI takes a step forward to ensure safe food to beneficiary

India is the second-largest food producer in world but on Global Hunger Index 2014, India ranked 103rd out of the world's 119th hungriest countries. Due to some protocols, food businesses also destroy food with smaller shelf life. Prevention of food waste and promotion of surplus food distribution is a global concern. To address the same, FSSAI steered a second round of meeting with 20 Surplus Food Distribution Agencies from various parts of the country to discuss the steps taken by government to ensure safe distribution of surplus food. The first such meeting was organized on 30th July, which was attended by 13 Surplus Food Distribution Agencies.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India had gazette notified Food Safety and Standards (Recovery of Surplus Food) Regulations, 2018 on 4th August 2019 to establish a uniform national regulation to protect organizations and individuals when they donate food in good faith. This will further encourage big food businesses to come forward and donate food to these Surplus Food Distribution Agencies. These regulations will be enforced with effect from 1st July 2020.



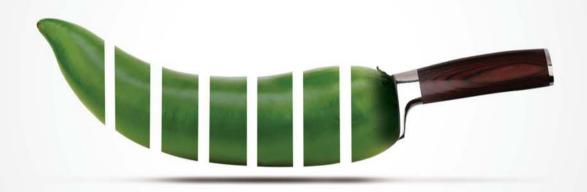
Pawan Agarwal, **CEO FSSAI** 

FSSAI has also started an initiative called 'Save Food, Share Food, Share Joy' to create a food recovery ecosystem. This initiative aims to bridge the gap between food companies, surplus food distribution agencies and beneficiaries. One of the key features is creation of Indian Food Sharing Alliance (IFSA) - A network of food collection/recovery agencies in India, to create a pan-India network of these agencies. This network will serve as a common platform for this cause wherein all of them will be equally benefitted with regulatory support, food safety training and capacity building efforts.

The meeting was targeted to apprise these agencies about their roles and responsibilities in ensuring safe food collection & distribution as well as prevention of food waste. They were also trained on hygiene practices during food collection and distribution under Food Safety Training and Certification (FoSTaC). It will be mandatory for surplus food distribution agencies to register with FSSAI on food licensing portal. FSSAI provided on the spot registration to the agencies attending. At present, 20 such agencies have been registered on FSSAI licensing portal.

CEO FSSAI Pawan Agarwal announced free FSSAI registration for these participating agencies. The forum also provided an opportunity to the surplus food distribution organizations to share their concerns and suggestions to help the network grow. Representatives from Elan Professional Appliances Pvt. Ltd. attended the meeting to present their ideas for ensuring solutions to ensure safe food handling during food recovery and distribution. They have also committed to extend CSR support to select agencies in developing their systems for safe food handling.





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## India's first interstate perishable food delivery for consumers launched

JustMyRoots.com, a Food tech platform in the country that connects people back to their roots through food — has launched India's first interstate perishable food delivery for consumers. What it means is that even when you are away from home, you can still browse for food that comes directly from your home or home



town, thanks to the patented packaging solution pioneered by Justmyroots.com

As a pioneer in Interstate Perishable Food Delivery, Justmyroots.com uses patented packaging solution to keep the food chilled and fresh with no preservatives. With their unique packaging, the food is maintained between 5 and 8 degree Centigrade. The App 'justmyroots' provides some of the best choices and user-friendly menu optimizations, which allows easy product selection and their delivery is done with excellent patented packaging, keeping the

freshness and aroma of the food intact.

Samiran Sengupta, CEO & Founder, Justmyroots.com says: "With Justmyroots.com, you are never away from either vour favorite restaurant or your nostalgic dish cooked by your mom. We have perfected the art of inter-state perishable food delivery without adding preservatives or freezing the food. We see a big market for Justmyroots.com in the coming months and in the years ahead."

With justmyroots.com, home-cooked food from a mother's kitchen is delivered to her child in any city or state across India. The App also has an option for a call or chat with an expert who can give suggestions when required. Having selected the most celebrated and sought after restaurants in each city, justmyroots. com also acts as a guide for 'foodies' across India and assures that if the restaurant is on their site, consumers can get to try the food.

To place an order, you can download app 'Justmyroots' from Playstore or App store, or reach them on +91 7042059800 and check out their latest deals on https://justmyroots.com/.

## Biscuit association seeks lower GST on packs below Rs 100 per kg

Seeking revised Goods & Services Tax (GST) of 5% for entry-level biscuits priced up to Rs 100 per kg, industry body Biscuit Manufacturers Welfare Association (BMWA) has written to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, stating that affordable biscuit consumption has been steadily declining over the past few months. The letter says reduction in GST from the existing 18% to 5% on biscuits with sale value up to Rs 100 per kg, will be "a big enabler" for mass categories like glucose, marie and milk-based biscuits. The letter further states that restructured GST of 5% for biscuits below Rs 100 per kg will "enable consumers to not depend on the unorganised segment, incentivise the industry to utilise its manufacturing capacities, optimise utilisation of installed capacities and revive demand". The letter estimates the domestic biscuits market at Rs. 37,000 crore annually, and that 25% sales comprise of low price high nutrition categories including glucose, marie and milk sold at prices below Rs 100 per kg.

The GST Council is scheduled to meet on 20 September to consider tax revisions on various categories including biscuits and the auto sector. Before



the GST regime commenced, biscuits priced below Rs 100 per kg were exempted from excise. Post the GST implementation, all biscuits are levied with 18% GST.

## Amazon India expects a strong festive sales season

E-commerce giant Amazon says it sees no "signs of anxiety" from sellers and brands that are lining up new products for the festive season ahead. Amazon.in, which will host its festive sale from September 29-October 4, expects about 70 per cent of its customers to come from smaller cities and towns. "We have 500,000 sellers. The rate of new sellers joining is strong, we have grown from 350,000 to 500,000 over the past 12 months and more importantly, selection has also gone up... We don't see any signs of anxiety," Amazon India Vice President (Category Management) Manish Tiwary said.

E-commerce companies, which see a large chunk of



Editorial credit: lakshmiprasada S / Shutterstock.com

their sales during the festive season, start preparing for festive sales months in advance - ramping up logistics and hiring thousands of temporary workers to ensure timely delivery of products. Amazon.in has expanded fulfillment footprint with more than 50 fulfillment centres (warehouses) in 13 states offering a storage capacity of over 20 million cubic feet. Rival Flipkart had announced that it will host its flagship event 'The Big Billion Days' from September 29 to October 4.

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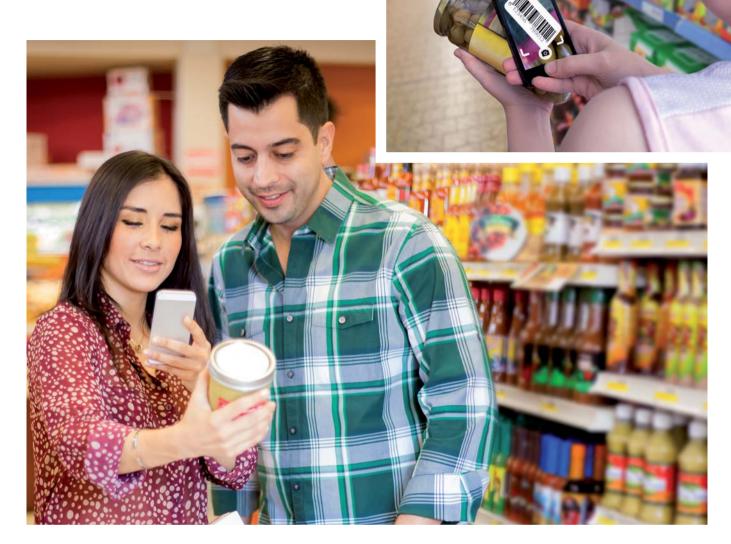
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## Empowering Shoppers through Smart Consumer App



How the 'Smart Consumer' mobile app is helping brands and manufacturers to now connect directly with thousands of consumers across the country as never before.

hile standing in the breakfast food aisle of the supermarket she shops at, Nitisha, a 40-year old mother, is contemplating which cereals are best for her two children and the different ways they can be made for them to enjoy the meals. The information on the product packs is however not enough to help her make these decisions. She then notices on the product pack that consumers are being directed to download the 'Smart Consumer' mobile app and scan the barcode on the product pack to get additional information she is looking for.

She downloads the same and scans the product barcode using "890" prefix number through her smartphone. She now gets digitally a whole lot more information on the cereals related to recipes, allergens, etc, which enables her to also check the validity of certification given to the manufacturing unit by FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India). Since this data is provided directly by food manufacturers/ brand owners, she can correlate with the information appearing on the product label and be assured that there is no mismatch.

This app enables her to do much more. If her children enjoy the cereals and how they are made, she can give an instant feedback to the manufacturer/ brand owner. Or perhaps even request/ suggest for new flavors, etc. If, however, she is not happy with the product, she can give an instant feedback in this instance as well through the 'Smart Consumer' mobile app.

Manufacturers/ brand owners are looking for consumer feedback/ insights on their products, which help them better understand consumer needs and bring out new products that meet the growing and ever changing consumer demands. Through the 'Smart Consumer' mobile app, they can now connect directly with thousands of consumers across the country as never before.



## **WHAT'S SMART CONSUMER MOBILE APP?**

The Smart Consumer mobile app is developed by the Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India - powered by GS1's DataKart - which empowers consumers with digital product information on a product's name, date of manufacture, MRP, net content, along with the manufacturer's details and consumer care details. Consumers can also use the app to verify the company/ product information given on the label and to connect with brands.

The app is also designed for faster settlement of grievances. Recently, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) made it mandatory to publish FSSAI licence numbers along with other product attributes for all food products to the Smart Consumer mobile app. This guideline will ensure that whatever products sold are not expired, maintain the quality and nutritional facts as stated by the brand owner and are certified by FSSAI.



With new food products being introduced each month, it becomes important for manufacturers to reach out to consumers to promote their new products through added information, which cannot be printed due to the limitation of space on product pack labels. The same becomes possible through the 'Smart Consumer' app, which draws information on retailed products from 'DataKart', a GS1 India's national repository.

GS1 India's DataKart is the national repository of information on retailed products in India. It enables SMEs in particular to distribute information about their products with multiple retailers and online marketplaces at one go. SMEs can also reach out to thousands of kirana stores across the country through PoS (Point-of-Sale) solution providers who supply PoS hardware and software, pre-loaded with product information sourced from DataKart.

All major retail chains in India and leading online marketplaces are increasingly turning to DataKart as a single source of trusted, up-to-date and complete information on retailed products. The platform currently hosts information on over 7.5 million retailed products in India across product categories, which include food, FMCG, apparel, general merchandise, personal care, consumer electronics, home/kitchen appliances, etc. PG

The write-up is courtesy GS1 India, a Standards body with founder members comprising Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, CII, FICCI, ASSOCHAM, FIEO, IMC, APEDA, Spices Board, IIP and BIS.



**Major retail** chains in India and leading online marketplaces are increasingly turning to DataKart as a single source of trusted, up-to-date and complete information on retailed products.



## The Impatient Consumer, iOT and the Food of Everything

There is more to foods than meets the eye. There is technology. There is the consumer who is forever morphing. And there is the future. Let's peep into it.

## By Harish Bijoor



s India the Most Exciting Food Market in the World Really? Must be. The diversity of food we still eat, and the lack of a clonal habit in food and beverage intake is a hall-mark reality of India. Literally no two families eat the same. The country is diverse in other ways as well. The country, which hitherto was all abut a home-kitchen oriented market, is eating out more than ever. Add to it the fact that we eat

not only with our mouth but with our eyes and ears as well. With food television becoming a big thing, the food market is an exciting one to be in. A market that will possibly define some of the future trends in food and beverage for the world to watch, use and see.

In this article, I am going to explore two different aspects that are defining food, beverage, its intake and the trends that will shape India later.

One is a technology trend that will re-define it all, and the other is a consumer watch trend that goes with the way the new consumer in India is behaving. Let me lead with technology and move on to the consumer in the latter half.

## The Internet of Things

The big technology trend I am excited of at this point in time is the Internet of Things (iOT). All of us have heard of it by now. The era of the iOT or the Internet Of Things is here. Some marketing and technology evangelists have dubbed it an era of the iOE or the Internet Of Everything. An era where the Internet as we know it becomes incidental. So incidental that we even forget the way the Internet of today exists and we start co-living with the Internet as if it did not exist at all. An Internet era where everything is literally governed by the Internet and an era where you do not go to the Internet but the Internet comes to you. And eventually, an era where the Internet is a part of you and you are a part of the Internet at large. A point of time when you will not know where you end and where the ubiquitous Internet begins even.

Ouch! That sounds bizarre. Painful even. Intrusive for sure. The iOT is a productised evolution of what began as a service. Let me trace its history. In the very beginning, we lived in an era where one person spoke to another and made friends physically. If you had friends, you possibly had about ten of them at maximum, and you spent time with them when you could. You had enough time on your hands. So much so that you could meet, talk for long hours over a cup of coffee or an even more exciting beverage, you could go to the movies, play a game of cricket on a Sunday and maybe do lots more.

And then time became a scarce commodity. Time stopped being a commodity even. Time today has become a very important part of the consumer currency. The consumer counts two things that he always like to have more of: money and time. Both are valuable currencies. Time is something that you cannot earn back. Time is something that you can only spend. It is limited and cannot be topped up at your nearest telecom re-charge outlet. Money, on the other hand, can be spent and earned. While time is God-given and limited without top-up, money is that much more flexible. Consumers then value time more than money. They should. When you don't have enough time to spend, what do you do? You look for ways and means to keep up with those friends of yours, with timesaving means and devices. In comes the telephone as an instrument, and wow!

You are able to keep the conversations going, even without being out there physically at your favourite 'Adda'. Yes, it is nicer to be there physically, but when you cannot, a lovely conversation with



your friends on the phone will do. As time passed, in came the mobile phone, and you could carry these conversations with you wherever you went. The machine (in this case the mobile phone) intervened and life was made more comfortable. Still good. You were still in touch with your ten friends. You are now in touch with your friends not 1:1 physically, but virtually. Sub-optimal and a compromise, but still good for you. Out here, you were using a machine (the landline or mobile phone) to intervene and continue the contact. You used your mobile handset and dialled your friend and your friend used her mobile phone and picked up the call. This was what I will call human-tohuman conversation facilitated by the machine and the connectivity possible between those two machines due to the intervention of the telecom service provider. This is what we do today.

In comes the era of the Internet then. In comes the ability for people to send e-mails to one another at the basic level. These e-mails are sent by you using a machine (your desktop, laptop, tablet or smartphone) and your friend and maybe thousands of them receive it when they open their e-mails using the machines at their disposal. This is less intrusive than the mobile call. In many ways, it is permission oriented communication at its best. If someone wants to open the email you sent them, they can. If they don't want to, they can press the delete button. And this is surely the era of mass contact possibility. One e-mail could touch thousands for sure.

In came social media then. In came Facebook, Twitter, Tagged, and all the other exciting social contact mediums you use openly and at times using the confidence and trusted space of your bedroom or bathroom alike. Out here, you could continue conversations in an interactive manner. Instead of having just ten friends, you could have a hundred. Geography is history. The new geography of your

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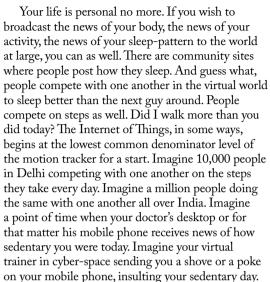
Your life is personal no more. If you wish to broadcast the news of your body, the news of your activity, the news of your sleep-pattern to the world at large, you can as well.

friendship is the virtual space of the social media you are using. This then is the early emergence of communication between one human being and a hundred others. Again, this is machine facilitated. Again, this is permission-led. The exciting part of this is the fact that people do not have physical friends anymore. The friends are as virtual as the bits and bytes that help you use the computer.

The rise of social media has led to an interesting development. Today, the relevance and importance of data is more than at any time before. An average youngster below the age of 25 in Pune has 321 friends on the social mediums of his choice, all added up. This includes Facebook, and the three other mediums they co-habit and inhabit. In Bengaluru, this number today stands at 316. Ouch! But all of this is still an example of many communications, still facilitated by two machines operated by two human beings talking to one another through the use of data and text. Nice.

## More Exciting Things to Come. What is this iOT All About?

The Internet of Things is here then. An evolution of the productised version of what began as a service. In the beginning there was communication that was 1:1 between friends. And then in came telecom. Two machines at either end facilitated the conversation between two friends sitting in different geographies. In came e-mail and this communication ceased to remain 1:1 even. And now, viola! In comes the iOT. Out here in the era of the iOT, everything around us is getting more and more intelligent. The era of the tracker is here. Fitbit is a motion tracker. You wear it round your wrist in a silicon bracelet and it tracks the numbers of steps you walk, how you sleep and how you don't as well. The basic technology of the motion tracker is here. This tracker sticks close to your body in an appendage, and tracks your every move. You can track yourself via GPRS if you wish.

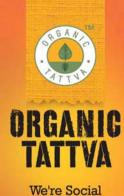


Imagine, imagine, imagine. The power of the motion tracker alone is a very big power. The tracker tells you what you did. The tracker compares what you did as opposed to what others did. The tracker communicates to your doctor and virtual trainer as well. Tomorrow, expect your tracker talking to your insurance company on a regular basis. And expect your insurance company offering you a rebate on your health insurance premium just because you took an average of 30,000 steps a day last year, as opposed to a national average of 5,000.

The Internet of Things is just about stirring. It is a revolution that is slated to wake up and shake us all up. It is a device and tracker-led revolution. This is a device and tracker and connectivity and communication-led revolution. The world today has 10 billion devices. Of these, seven billion are mobile phones. The other three billion are sundry other devices. As of today, the seven billion phones talk to one another when enabled by their human owners at both ends. When you make a call to Mrs. Kapoor, you are enabling the call. Mrs. Kapoor at the other end will decide whether to enable her mobile phone to receive the call, or terminate it. To that extent, this connectivity is all about permission-oriented connectivity.







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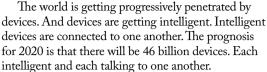


The Internet of Things is just about stirring. It is a revolution that is slated to wake up and shake us all up. It is a device and tracker-led revolution. This is a device and tracker and connectivity & communication-led revolution.



The era of the iOT is however one that is going to be one of intelligent connectivity, enabled just once. Once you have done that, at times by just accepting to have an intelligent chip in your device, communication is going to be a continuous, and at times a two-way process. You will possibly buy a refrigerator tomorrow, which has an intelligent chip in it. The intelligent refrigerator will talk directly to your web-enabled grocer. When the Coke bottles are nearing empty status on your bottle-rack, your doorstep will have a replenishment delivery. You will never run dry of Coke then. Ever. Take that one step further to the B2B application. Your grocer will have his intelligent-shelf chip talking to the local Coke distributor. The grocer will never ever run dry of stock. Take it further then. The Coke distributor has a chip that talks to the local bottler. And the bottler has a chip that talks to possibly Atlanta direct. The possibilities are therefore endless.

Forget the mundane. Imagine possibilities. Predictive manufacturing is already a reality. The Mercedes Benz you bought yesterday in Hoshiarpur is possibly talking to the manufacturing plant direct. Its brake lining is speaking to Berlin. The moment it is wearing out, it is alerting the plant to produce and make it available in time at the local dealer in Hoshiarpur possibly. Think. Imagine. Fantasise even! This is not science fiction. This is reality today.



We are at the doorstep of this revolution. Even as it unfolds, there are serious security concerns that are being flagged. The security industry is working overtime to fight that one possible Trojan that might infect and take over. They seem to be winning the fight as of now. In many ways, nothing is private and personal anymore. Privacy is dying if not dead, and no one seems to be complaining. Have you noticed how the young amidst us love to have their lives public on social media? Have you realised that the young love to flaunt more than the old in our midst do? Privacy goes to the cleaners. On that note, it's ok when your washing machine is talking to your grocer. Imagine a time when your washing machine is talking to Mrs. Khanna's washing machine. The gossip starts then. The problem starts then!

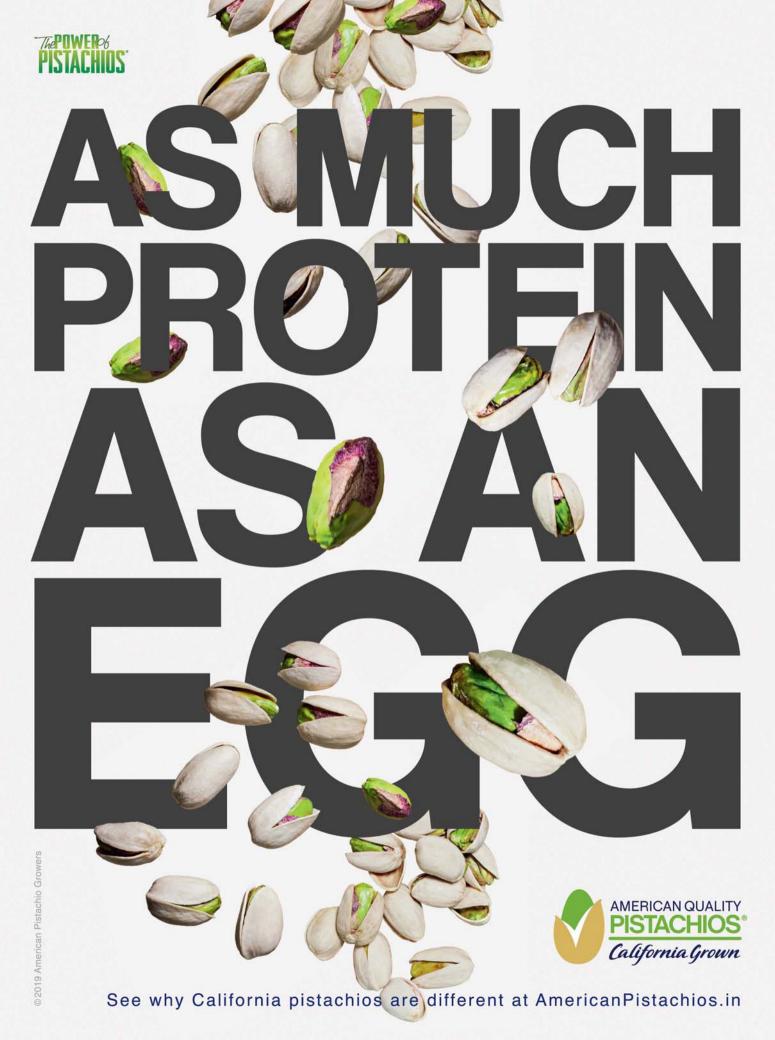
## The Consumer Morphs: From Need to Greed

Civilisations and nations move forward all the while. History has shown us this amply. The movement forward has always been punctuated by gaps of course, but these gaps, by and large, are but commas and pit stops. Pauses where civilisations and nations actually take a break, rejuvenate, regather and move forward again. This entire forward motion of nations is all about a latent hunger that leads us just one-way: forward.

Consumer societies across the globe are engulfed today in this forward motion. And this motion is oiled by hunger. And hunger, in my thinking, has two avatars: hunger and greed. While hunger is basic and latent, greed is evolved and sophisticated. Both, within their own perspectives, are good. Hunger is good. And some say, greed is good as well.

Let me start this exploration with hunger. And then move on to greed. After all, hunger normally precedes greed. Hunger is a basic force. Freud told us we are hungry for the basics. In many ways it is for food, clothing (for warmth and not for cosmetic appeal), shelter and sex. Man therefore craves for the basics. These basics make him and her forage for each of these basics. In many ways it is survival of the fittest as well. The driving force in this acquisition-spree is really an animalistic force that looks at survival. Consumer-society is therefore hungry. It has been hungry in India for decades now. Go back to the era just before and after independence. The hunger was surely for the basics. The hunger was to ensure that one was able to lead a decent life, acquiring the basics. While food, clothing and shelter could be spoken of, the fourth aspect of sex was also ensconced in the institution of marriage that provided it within its sanctity. And therefore was an un-spoken.





The quest of modern consumer society in India is not only for the 'want' and the 'need' fulfilling products and services, but is also for the 'desire' and 'aspiration' fulfilling products and services.

As India moved ahead, basic hunger for the bottom-rung items gave way to hunger at the higher end. When it came to food, consumers were now concerned not only with securing the next month's square meal for the entire family, but were concerned about ensuring a few years of food security at least. When it came to clothing, desires led the way and cosmetic appeal came crawling in. You needed to wear clothes, but colour and texture and fashion came in as well. And when it came the turn of shelter, the consumer was not content with a rented house anymore. The craving and quest was to own the house. Thankfully, when it came to sex, marriage remained the institution to operate within.

The hunger for the basics remained. This hunger however, climbed a few notches and evolved. Consumers evolved and started segmenting their hunger across different ladder-rungs that had 'hunger' at the lower end and 'greed' sitting right at the top. Simultaneously, society got stratified across economic rungs. The 'haves' started climbing the ladder and the 'have-nots' kept struggling to fulfill their basic needs at the bottom-rung of the ladder. Indian society therefore had a very stratified feel with economic segments of every kind and affordability segments of every kind, living together in the same village, the same tehsil, the same district and indeed in the same city. Basic need craving therefore literally lived together in the same village, rubbing shoulders with higher-end greed, as it evolved. Everyone lived happily. Or so it seemed.

As hunger kept evolving from the basic to the advanced, the motivation levels in the people at large as well kept evolving. This basic quest to fulfill hunger was a positive drive in a large number of cases, and a negative drive in a small niche. Those who took the positive route took to the education of their children and took care of hunting out good jobs for themselves. These were the types who got a job and worked very hard. So hard that no one else worked as hard. The driving force was the need to earn enough to get all the goodies to make for a good and secure life. And those who took the negative route, took to every negative way of making money. If stealing and cheating was a way to do it, so be it. The development of India and its consumer society to the aggressive levels of today is a function of this basic hunger. Hunger became the motivation and its fulfillment became a point of satiation and gratification. Consumer society at this level was very concerned about gratification of its needs and possibly wants. It wanted nothing more. Life was good. And large chunks of Indian society worked hard to achieve this.

Well then, that was the story of the past. How are we doing today? Where are these various chunks of consumer society? And how is the hunger-evolution doing? Look around ourselves and look first at the big cities of the day. Every Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai and Bengaluru has every kind of stratified denizen living within it. Cheek to jowl. Indian consumer society, despite all these years of independence, still shows stratified layers of the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. The 'haves' use the 'have-nots' to fulfill their chores. The



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The entire DNA of businesses need to change keeping in mind the new Gen we are living through: The Impatient generation. The I-Gen.!

I have climbed. In the beginning I wanted a car. I wanted to upgrade from my humble scooter. My first car was a second-hand Fiat. I moved on in life and earned for myself a brand new Maruti Zen. I got promoted and wanted an Esteem. I got the bite of hunger and a wee bit of greed led me on. I got my first Honda Citi. Greed and a wee bit of what I thought was hunger kept me going and got me my Mercedes Benz. I am stuck there as of now. My next desire is a JLR. I will work hard for it.

How is hunger gearing different parts of society then? When I look at data, I find consumer society that is sitting high up on the ladder at the rung of greed, less hungry in sheer motivation terms than the ones that are sitting right at the bottom rung of the ladder. The burning desire and fire in the belly is really at the bottom-rung of the ladder of Indian consumer society today. Large chunks of population segments are sitting here. And this is the potential success story of India. This hunger and fire in the belly resides more in the small towns and villages of India today than it does in the big cities.

This is an exciting fact. Those that have already gained their riches and their goodies at the top rung of the ladder are dulled into a certain somnoloscence of having everything. The fire in the belly is dead at this level. Except for the occasional ulcer that acts up for sure! The real hunger at the bottom of the ladder of Indian consumer society is one that is going to drive this nation forward in every sphere, be it manufacturing, agriculture or the services sector. This basic drive at the basic end of the demographics of India is going to define the frenetic growth rate of GDP in the country in the years ahead. Cheers to that!

And before you sleep today, ask yourself the question. Are you 'hungry' or 'greedy? Or both for that matter? The Impatient and Hungry Consumer Marketing folk are famous for inventing labels. We love to invent dog-tags for generations of

consumers. Remember the way we labeled Gen X, Gen Y and Gen Z? What next? What's the Generation we are living through called? I had to sit under my own Peepul Tree to invent a name for the generation of consumers we are living with and through, as marketers and business folk in the business of buying and selling and hopefully making lives better.

My recent studies in the consumer space indicate that there is a very distinct trend we spot in the new consumer of today. This one trend is Impatience, with a capital T. The new consumer of today is more impatient than the consumer just one marketing generation before us. And guess what, if one is to read the graffitti on the wall, the Next Gen consumer is going to be even more impatient. Frightfully so. Have you noticed how everyone is getting impatient amidst us? Our husbands and wives are more impatient than even one generation before us. Our mothers and fathers are more impatient as well. Our children are even more so. No one has the time to listen to the 'old' philosophy of patience. Impatience is in the air we live.

I was jolted to reality the other day by this theory of impatience that is sweeping through our lives. Gone are the days when you could preach patience and get away with it. I remember the one word of counseling HR folk had to anyone who went to them complaining about a bad increment or the fact that they did not get promoted. Patience. Be patient, and everything will fall into place. This, sadly, seems to be an old virtue. The new world is an impatient one and does not believe in patience at all. Patience is the bad word, and Impatience the good one. Impatience is a virtue today, it seems.

Take my own case. My 16 year old son went to school one fine morning. He was participating in an election for the post of Sports Secretary. Polling happened in the school democracy, and my son came back home in the evening. Accidentally, he found his dad at home as well. Dad looked at son, saw a depressed face, and I went to him and tried to console him. I said in my mature and well-practised

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older counseling voice. "Son, winning and losing is a part of the game. You must take both with equanimity'.







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This generation of consumers is all about speed and quickness. If an election happens in the morning, they expect results by the evening if not by afternoon itself. No one has the time to wait and watch.

happened in the morning first session, but results had not been announced by the time school closed. Aha! This was surely impatience at its peak. I therefore sat my son down and gave him a piece of 'gyan' on patience for twenty minutes. I spoke to him of the best theorists and practitioners of patience in the world. I went through Indian names such as Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Vivekananda as well. Twenty minutes went by, with me waxing and waning eloquent. At the end of the twenty minutes, my son looks at me and asks me a simple question. He asks. "Appa, when you can be Impatient, why be patient?" I just had no answer to this question. Stumped into stupor by the simplistic question, I tucked my 'gyan' giving tail and realised that the generation of the young in our lives is totally attuned to impatience. Patience is difficult for them to understand. Patience, sadly again, is an old virtue.

Impatience is the norm today and every marketer and business person needs to attune his business to impatience. Marketers of yesteryears were and are good at 'Patience Marketing' whereas the new requirement is 'Impatience Marketing'. Businesses need to develop the new skill, art, science and philosophy of Impatience. The entire DNA of businesses need to change keeping in mind the new Gen we are living through: The Impatient generation. The I-Gen.! This generation of consumers is all about speed and quickness. If an election happens in the morning, they expect results by the evening if not by afternoon itself. No one has the time to wait and watch. This is a generation led by time. I call this gen the Bio-clock generation as well. The BC Gen is here. A generation that is very sensitive to the fact that life is short. A generation that believes in the philosophy that shouts out loud, "YOLO"! You only live once! This generation believes life is all about a lifespan of 80 years multiplied into 364 or 365 days, multiplied into 24 hours.

Every moment is precious. Every moment that elapses is a moment that is over. The Bio-clock is ticking away every minute. You need to plan well for every hour for now. You need to be sure that every hour you expend results in a delivery that is quick and comfortable. This generation, more than any other, believes that we are dying every moment, rather than living. And that is the macro-trend in the I-Gen and the Bioclock Gen of today.

I work a fair bit in the IT and ITES industries. Out here, the age-profile of workers is low. The average age of the worker is 24 years. In IT, 33 per cent of the folk are women and in ITES the number goes up to 52 per cent. Both the genders are very frenetic in their life-styles. They have money in their hands when very young, they want to own a car even before their bike is three years old, and want to own a flat even before the ink on their first promotion letter has dried. Everyone wants everything fast and quick.



The young in the BC Generation plans every aspect of their lives to the tee. There is this young girl, all of 24, who is making a trip to Goa with her friends. She is spending three nights and four days in Goa with her friends. She has calculated that it is all of 11 meals she has in Goa. She is a big foodie. She has gone to Zomato and has mapped her every restaurant and every meal in Goa. She says she has little time and wants to maximise every bit. Therefore, she carries a Food Plan with her on her smartphone, customised to her taste. She will follow it to the tee. How boring. But how planned! Good or bad is not the issue. That's a value judgment we need to desist from passing. Spontaneity may be dead, but planning is in. And with planning, in comes the yen to maximise on time.

The Impatient Generation of today is all about wanting good service everywhere they go. It is all about speed and delivery. It is all about good quality in offerings. It is all about not tolerating a fault-line in any of this as well.

All this raises a challenge to the marketing and business environment built by older folk in the business, who just don't understand impatience. These folk are still waxing eloquent on the virtues of patience, just as I attempted to do it with my son. I think it is time for businesses to sit up and smell the coffee. It's time to smell the burning desire for impatience among the young. It is time to change and instill in all businesses, retail or otherwise, the ingredient of impatience. All businesses need to instill the 'new-virtue' of impatience into their business delivery mechanisms. If you are fooddelivery business, one fault is enough to taint your image forever. Forgiveness is out. It is old fashioned in an era where the options are many and myriad to choose from.

Well, if you don't agree with this, you can still fight the trend and try to buck it. Time alone will tell who was right and who wrong. But the key point is, can your business risk it? And must you? PG



Harish Bijoor is a brand-expert & CEO, Harish Bijoor Consults Inc., a private-label consulting practice that operates in the realm of brand and business strategy. Harish is a public speaker who speaks to corporate audiences across the globe in

the realm of motivation, people-management issues, brands, marketing and business at large.















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## Modern Movement

Not your grandfather's pallets, Today's solutions are tackling supply chain challenges head-on.

## By Jenny McTaggart

allets continue to serve their age-old purpose of transporting goods throughout the supply chain, but the latest versions of these supermarket stalwarts are taking their trusted role to a whole new level.

Today's pallet providers are working closer than ever before with their manufacturer and retailer partners to help address labor challenges, increase visibility and transportation efficiencies, meet sustainability goals, and even help position retailers against new competition.

Jeff Liebesman, CEO of Orlando, Fla.-based pallet-pooling company iGPS Logistics, explains the change in how pallet companies see themselves today.

"For quite some time, pallet manufacturing was viewed through what we see now was an overly simplistic approach to cost cutting," he says. "This

ultimately benefited pallet manufacturers more than the customers they served. A race for the cheapest pallet also meant a race for the lowest-quality pallet, which produces increased costs for distributors and retailers via lost or damaged product, higher transport and cleanup costs, a shorter pallet lifespan, and higher risk of worker injury, to name a few. What we're seeing today and in the past few years in pallet development is a more comprehensive view of the supply chain, so that pallet customers receive the lowest total cost of business, rather than pay more for problems caused by inferior pallets."

At iGPS, new pallet capabilities are highlighted by sanitation (last year, the company partnered with El Cajon, Calif.-based PURE Bioscience to develop a proprietary sanitizer), and technology, which "enables the sort of macro-level savings customers look for," according to Liebesman, who adds that the



company's RFID-equipped pallets help customers get the most efficiency out of their automated systems. This includes advanced shipment tracking and instantaneous pallet-load scanning, both of which save considerable time and money.

Alpharetta, Ga.-based CHEP North America, a pallet and solutions provider that has built its reputation on pooling reusable pallets, crates and containers, is also focused on providing more savings for its customers by working with them to solve supply chain challenges.

In one example, a little more than two years ago, CHEP began talking with a large North American retailer to help the company prepare for



## SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIES

As talk about "circular economies" gains ground in U.S. politics and the business world, some of the leading pallet providers may have been ahead of their time.

Alpharetta, Ga.-based CHEP North America is a circular-economy business by nature, and has been since its inception in 1946, according to George Brehovsky, director of customer solutions. "We're offering the same pallet, crate or container that one customer uses and returns back to us from retail, and then we repurpose that same pallet, crate or container for another customer to use," he explains. "By doing that, we're able to extend that platform's lifecycle, but also more importantly, measure the benefits of supporting the sharing economy amongst all our customers."

Brehovsky notes that a lot of today's large, fast-moving consumer goods companies are making sustainability a priority, so working with a company like CHEP helps them meet their objectives in this area, and their overall social corporate responsibility goals. Another environmentally friendly bonus to CHEP's business model: "The majority of our pallets are made out of a renewable resource - wood - and we source our wood from sustainable tree farms," he says.

Jeff Liebesman, CEO of Orlando, Fla.-based pallet-pooling company iGPS Logistics, notes that his company's pallets, while plastic, are 100 percent recycled. "This makes them more environmentally friendly than wooden or nonrecycled alternatives," he says, "as well as less expensive to manufacture, as old pallets are remolded into new ones - a savings we pass on to our customers."





the entrance of hard-line discounters into the U.S. market, according to George Brehovsky, CHEP's director of customer solutions. Since CHEP is owned by a global company, Brambles, its supply chain team was able to draw from best practices in other markets, including European retailers that had already dealt with this type of competition.

CHEP and the U.S. retailer identified a handful of high-velocity products that would have the right amount of shelf space, facings and ideal categories to use CHEP's CarbonNeutral Half Pallet (40 inches by 24 inches in size) all the way from the point of production to the shelf.

CHEP and the retailer decided on private label sugar, a high-velocity item that's been traditionally associated with spills and other labor challenges. With a focus on more efficient replenishment, CHEP chose its half pallet to reduce product touches, improve supply chain efficiencies, increase on-shelf availability, and ultimately reinvest savings into price by reducing the size of the unit load and automating the product's shipment all the way to the shelf.

"Essentially, what we worked on is removing the shelf display the way it had existed, using a highvelocity item that would have to be manually stocked on the shelf, and actually getting the manufacturer of that product to automate onto a half pallet all the way to the shelves, and only replenish the half-pallet position once the product had been sold down to the bottom layer," explains Brehovsky.

In the northeastern United States, this moneysaving program has now rolled out to more than 800 stores, he says. In addition, the concept is being expanded with a different product vinegar - in the Canadian market.



The Pally can work with a range of reusable totes and containers for picking, restocking and multichannel purposes.

— Mike Ludka Orbis Corp









What we've been hearing from our customers is the need for more transparency in the industry.

— H George Brehovsky
CHEP

## There's a Pallet for That

Orbis Corp., a pallet company based in Oconomowoc, Wis., is focusing on its customers' supply chain efficiencies with a variety of applications to serve different purposes, whether in distribution center/warehouse handling, retail deliveries, store replenishment or ecommerce order picking, according to Mike Ludka, senior product manager.

Orbis' plastic warehousing pallets, for instance, are often "stackable and rackable," and are dimensionally consistent for an automated warehouse. Its general 40-inch-by-48-inch distribution pallets, meanwhile, are often nestable for secure and stable outbound shipments, and, when empty, nest for efficient return trips.

Ludka also points to the popularity of small-format pallets, which are becoming increasingly popular as more grocers opt for smaller-format stores. And the Pally – Orbis' unique pallet/dolly combination – helps bring speed and efficiency to the grocery supply chain by reducing the number of touch points and handling needed to unload a truckload and position product in store. "The Pally can work with a range of reusable totes and containers for picking, restocking and multichannel purposes," notes Ludka.

Orbis has found that bulk merchandising solutions are proving popular with retailers looking to save time and effort. Its bulk milk-delivery system, for example, is a dolly paired with a removable handle and four trays to minimize physical labor at retail and streamline merchandising. "This retail-ready system holds 80 gallons of fluid milk and can be rolled off the truck and right into the cooler for consumer shopping," observes Ludka.



New Pallets from iGPS feature RFID technology to help with advanced shipment tracking, as well as a proprietary sanitizer to kill bacteria.



## **Key Takeaways**

- Pallet providers are designing products to deal with labor challenges, boost visibility and transportation efficiencies, achieve sustainability goals, and help retailers take on new competition.
- Small-format pallets are gaining in popularity as grocers increasingly move toward smaller-footprint stores.
- Even more advanced pallets are in the pipeline as manufacturers explore digital solutions such as artificial intelligence and RFID.

## **Pallets' Future Potential**

When it comes to the future of pallets, it looks like even more promising solutions are on the way, particularly as pallet companies harness the potential of artificial intelligence, RFID and other digital tools.

CHEP's Brehovsky explains that the company even has a division concentrating on digital development, thanks in part to the company's investment in BXB Digital. "Our view in the digital space is not just using it for tracking, but also for customers' goods visibility," he says. "What we've been hearing from our customers is the need for more transparency in the industry. That transparency, from our standpoint, is at the unit load level."

Continues Brehovsky: "Our vision for the future is smarter, more efficient unit loads that increase that end-to-end product visibility, and also monitor the product condition and quality. We've been learning a lot by deploying pilots with customers, and we're fully envisioning that this is going to become an integral part of us transitioning to an insights-based business in the future."

He adds that by using pallet data from a variety of customers, via its pooling model, CHEP's data gathering becomes even more powerful to help with supply chain problem solving. In fact, the company is already using universal data to help tackle transportation challenges. "We've been able to translate pallet flow information into truckload information, and we've been partnering with our customers for a number of years now to collaborate on reducing, or in a lot of cases eradicating, empty miles," he says.

Liebesman, at iGPS, expects the current focus on pallet and supply chain technology to continue, especially as automation technology grows so rapidly. "The supply chain space is particularly ripe for automation, given its comparatively high level of repetitious physical tasks," he says, "so expect more and more companies to invest in RFID-equipped systems, and more research and development to be devoted to artificial intelligence-driven shipping processes." PG



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# L'Opéra makes its mark as the authentic French bakery in India

t all dates back to 2011 when the Samandari family shifted to India. Born and brought up in France, it was inevitable for them to miss the French authenticity in the country. It was this realization that spurred Laurent Samandari to come up with the idea of introducing a French Boulangerie in India and thus, L'Opéra came into being. The brand started with its flagship store in Delhi's iconic Khan Market. Today, L'Opéra has expanded its presence

to over 15 points of sale in Delhi-NCR & Dehradun at various high-street locations. The family is actively involved in running the business and maintaining the high standards of service and excellence that L'Opéra has set for itself. Recounting their experience that laid the foundation of the French Boulangerie, Laurent Samandari, MD, L'Opéra says: "We are the pioneers who introduced the finest French pâtisserie – Boulangerie – in India. We are faithful to our roots and are authentic with our French offerings, ambience and décor. For us, that is our USP. Our positioning in that regard is premium; however, the pricing is fairly competitive."



L'Opéra, a high-end pastry and bakery house in Delhi-NCR, specializes in French bakery products and has been the pioneer of high-end, authentic French bakery products in India. Some of the products that it pioneered in India was macaron as well as the finest French pâtisserie – Boulangerie – thereby creating a market for these products. With the concept getting well appreciated by the customers and becoming a great success with the patrons, the brand has embarked on an ambitious expansion plan. Laurent Samandari, MD, L'Opéra, speaks to *Progressive Grocer* about the company's pioneering efforts in creating and building a market for French bakery products in the Capital and its plans for further growing the business.

From the classic French quick bites such as Croque Monsieur (made with home-made bread and filled with béchamel sauce, ham and cheese), Vol au Vent, onion and tomato tarts with goat cheese to pumpkin & coconut milk soup, signature pastries and macarons, the menu caters to a diverse range of palates, with an excellent value proposition on its offerings. The product range has captured the attention of the tartgeted customers. And now, with its new Salon de Thé models, L'Opéra is an all-day dining destination offering all-day gourmet breakfast menu featuring classic French options such as fluffy French omelette with luxurious fillings and hot

croissant sandwiches and a variety of salads, to name a few. There is an impressive selection of refreshing summer drinks, juices and freshly-brewed coffee along with teas and infusions. However, the trademark range of French breads and pastries remain the best-selling products along with some of the chocolate-based pâtisseries. In terms of specific products, there are croissants, almond croissants, macarons, eclairs, etc., which remain a customer's delight.

### Brand's hallmarks and differentiators

The brand has its foundation in French cuisine and hence caters French food and recipes. L'Opera has created a benchmark when it comes to producing authentic French products in India and takes pride in declaring this as the basic differentiator of the brand from its competitors. Excellence is the savoir-faire of the brand, and the vision of the founding family is executed by a team of skilled chefs. Quality of the products is not compromised anyhow – be it in the quality of ingredients or the competence and experience of the chefs. The aim is to enhance the customers' experience and the seasons and trends play an important role as the classic offerings are modified accordingly to serve the demographics.



L'Opéra is now an allday dining destination offering allday gourmet breakfast menu featuring classic French options.





Parent company: French Bakery Pvt. Ltd.

Number of outlets and locations: 17

Brand/s name: L'Opéra

Headquarters: B-126, Sector 2, Noida

Launch date of first outlet: March, 2011

Total retail area under operation: 9,700 sq. ft.

Dish/food/beverage specialty:

Authentic French pastries and bakery items as

well as light French meals

Seats/cover size: 340 (approximately)

Total number of employees: over 170

## "We have launched an extensive line for corporate gifting, with elegant packaging and high shelf-life"



Laurent Samandari MD,L'Opéra

## Which are the product categories that you operate in and which are your top-selling products?

We offer high-end authentic French bakery and pastry products. Our range includes breads, Viennese pastries, salads, savories, sandwiches, pastries, cakes and macarons. Baguette bread and croissants are our top-selling products.

## What are you doing to make your products more appealing to consumers?

We always make sure our products are of excellent quality, which requires particular attention to detail and rigour in all the different stages of the process, from the sourcing of raw materials to production and logistics and, of course, the promotion of the products via our outlets and other channels. Moreover, our French Executive Chef makes sure the presentation of the products is up to the best standards.

## Which new developments and trends would you like to highlight regarding your line of business?

We have launched an extensive line for corporate gifting, with elegant packaging and high shelf-life products such as "La boite gourmande" (Box of Delights) containing freshly baked biscuits, carefully sourced preserves and a choice of fragrant tea. Personalized products for events such as weddings, anniversaries and other caterings have also been perfected, from marzipans to macarons to many kinds of biscuits.

## What are you doing to integrate health and freshness along with the convenience and taste factors?

All of our products are made from scratch with fresh ingredients and meticulously sourced raw materials. And although much butter is used in the Viennese pastries, many of our tarts are healthy, especially the eggless variant of our fruit tart. In the past years, people are taking more of a liking to European desserts. With a growing consciousness about the ill effects of sugar and cholesterol, we launched a range of sugarless products, including an eggless



choco-nut pastry, sweetened only with dates, or our almond banana cupcake. The products are all sweetened only with dates, maple syrup, honey or stevia. We have also expanded our array of salads to include tomato & mozzarrella and pesto pasta with vegetables.

## What all you are doing on the retail front to ensure increased product pick-up?

The quality of the products themselves is the biggest guarantor of product pick-up. But the presentation of the products is also important, which is why we have rigorous quality controls at the production center and the outlets to ensure the highest standards of presentation. Naturally, stellar customer service keeps people coming back to our stores, so routine trainings take place in order to foster a spirit of service and instill the French culture.

## Share with us some data regarding your sales numbers, growth, etc.

Our sales revenues have kept pace with our rapidly expanding footprint and the increase of our brand equity. Today, L'Opéra is one of the most recognised, respected and valuable names in the high-end F&B space.

## Tell us about your new products in the pipeline, new innovations in marketing, branding and retail, etc.

We are always on the lookout for new trends in the market. We have specific products for the festivities such as Valentine's Day, Easter, and others. We have created some new salty items and also launched some new breads. Online sales being an increasingly important aspect of most businesses in India, we are reinforcing our online presence.

## Which are the new trends in this segment and how are you positioned to play the market?

L'Opéra has been the pioneer of highend, authentic French bakery products. One of the products that we pioneered was macaron, thereby creating a market for it. And now, the popularity of French macarons, often referred to as the "jewel of French patisseries" has only increased these past years, as Indians have gained more disposable income and have expressed a growing interest in French products. There has also been more demand for whole wheat bread, and we are expanding our offer in this segment.

## Which are the major operational challenges that you face?

Every business has its challenges and we are happy that we have been successful in many ways. But there have been some roadblocks along the way. Good quality and pastry requires attention to details, such as the cold chain which, given Delhi's extreme heat during most of the year and humidity for some months of it, is a strenuous task indeed. Sourcing of raw materials is another significant challenge as is home delivery.

## How important is Superior packaging and labelling for your products?

Packaging and labelling is a crucial part of the presentation of any product in a high-end environment. For us at L'Opéra, both form and substance make up the finished product, which is why we pay much attention to the colours, combinations and the materials used for packaging, while making sure it that all is in line with our graphics charter and the concept behind L'Opéra. Our new line of gifting products is a good example of the rigour that goes into developing new product families.

## Tell us about your future plans.

We have significant expansion plans over the next years. We plan to open over 70 outlets over the next four years.

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Excellence is the savoir-faire of the brand and that is reflected in the vision of the founding family and executed by a team of skilled chefs. Along with bringing the authentic French bakery essence to its customers at a reasonable price, L'Opéra has also brought the 5-star hotel experience to the streets and the malls. "Indian customers are smart and value-conscious but when they set their foot into our outlets and taste our products, they know that we do absolute justice to the money they shell out at our outlets," says Laurent.

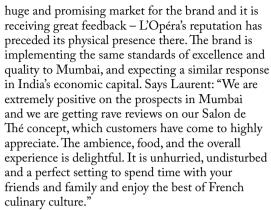
#### Key markets and customer segments

Currently, the brand is focused on Delhi-NCR for further expansion. But over the next several months, L'Opera will also target other metro cities. The brand is in advanced stages of discussions for operating in Mumbai. With such expansion plans in place, L'Opera is aiming at tripling the revenue over the next 18 months. The brand's presence in south Delhi is already strong, and with the new launch of outlets it will be present in west and south-west Delhi, Aerocity, Basant Lok, Vegas Mall in Dwarka and The Pearl Academy in Rajouri Garden as well. It is also looking for further expansion into the Golf Course Extension Road at IREO in Gurgaon as it is an important catchment area. In north Delhi, it is looking to operate its Salon de Thé model spread over two floors at Civil Lines. Finally, the roadmap is to reinforce its presence in Noida further before the end of 2019.

"Our key demographics are global Indians with higher disposable income and middle-income Indians, expatriates, tourists visitors, B2B customers, diplomats and envoys posted in the Capital," informs Laurent.

#### Growth drivers for the brand

The brand has concentrated on its presence in Delhi-NCR and has received great inputs from the customers. At the same time, Mumbai is a



Talking about the reasons behind L'Opéra's rapid success, he says: "With a stabilized operating model, we have the ability to understand the challenges better. And given our years of experience in the industry, we are all set to take on the market and are optimistic and excited. L'Opéra is a great model and is hugely appreciated and loved by connoisseurs and everyone else including the young and old, globalized and locals alike. The faith our customers have put in us, the love that we get, is a huge reassurance for our future growth."

# Strategy for addressing quality control concerns and supply chain issues

Challenges arise if the objectives and values of the company are not clear. At L'Opéra, one of the core values that form the foundation of the company is 'commitment to excellence and quality'. With the involvement of the founding members all along the organizational hierarchy to uphold the values even in the daily tasks, starting from the purchase of raw materials to packing the final products in the outlets and delivering them at the doorstep of customers, the family takes a keen interest in all matters related to the quality of products, right from the handling to the delivery all along the supply chain on a daily basis.

Most F&B players who operate on the Central-Kitchento-Multiple-Outlets model face the challenge of providing products in a timely manner as they want all stores to be ready to serve customers as early as possible. This small window of time poses the challenge in terms of what locations to be clubbed for routes to be taken; number of vehicles needed and proper entry timings to ensure that all products





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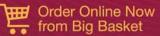
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# **→** `

# RETAILING STANDARDS THAT MAKE L'OPERA A CONSUMER'S DELIGHT

Supply Chain Management: Quality is a shared responsibility at L'Opera. It ensures that the best products make their way to the customers—from the purchasing to kitchen, logistics, and stores' operations. The brand is proud of the rich quality and authenticity of its products, the preparation process and the selection process of the ingredients. Only the best brands of packaged ingredients are used. The shelf life of products is closely monitored and the staff is trained to ensure there are no lapses.

The requirements for food quality control are:

- Seamless quality assurance from procurement to delivery of the final products to the customers
- ► Correct storage & preparation temperatures since materials like cream, butter, chocolate, etc. are used in the preparation.
- Right infrastructure in terms of freezers and power back up to maintain the temperatures.

Human Resource Policies /
Initiatives: The brand believes in
eight core values that form the
foundation of the company, namely:
commitment to excellence and
quality; honesty and transparency;
meritrocracy and equal
opportunity; courtesy; ownership
& accountability; responsible and



One of the values that the founders have always believed in is gender equality. Taking this line of thought forward, the HR Department has put in great efforts in order to strike a fine balance by giving equal opportunities to everyone, irrespective of gender. Production kitchen, which is considered a male-dominated area, also consists of fair number of women chefs. In fact, the female-male ratio at the company stands at around 35% and is constantly improving. There is no disparity in terms of salary as the brand believes in equal employment opportunity where people are selected based on their merit and not their gender.

F&B Quality & Safety: When it comes to quality, L'Opéra has created a benchmark for all the other F&B brands to follow. For the brand, quality control is constant throughout the production process. The staff only uses the best and highest quality ingredients. The brand does not import anything except when necessary. Maintaining quality is everyone's responsibility at L'Opera. The team looks out for everything, from purchasing raw material to weighing the ingredients, from using fresh products and to logistics to the store operations. In fact, the outlets' teams are always in contact with the chefs. If they see any inadequacies (melted or broken products etc), they immediately contact the chef.

Menu Planning: L'Opéra is known for its authentic French flavours of pastry, bakery and light meals. The production, marketing and packaging departments work together in order to create the best menu that customers can enjoy. The menu has the best of French cuisine –from Mille Feuille to Opéra cake and high-quality authentic breads. The range of light meals comprises classic French options such as Croque Monsieur, Vol au Vent, Quiches and Tarts– Mango and Pineapple, Apple and Rosemary, Tomato

and Goat Cheese, to name a few. A new vegan range of products will be introduced throughout all its outlets from September 2019 to coincide with 'Navratras', the Hindu fasting period.

Marketing & promotions: The brand uses digital platforms, social media and in-store marketing to disseminate information about its products along with a range of catalogues that advertise its gifting and catering services and solutions. L'Opéra products and services are cost effective when compared to other competitors in the market.

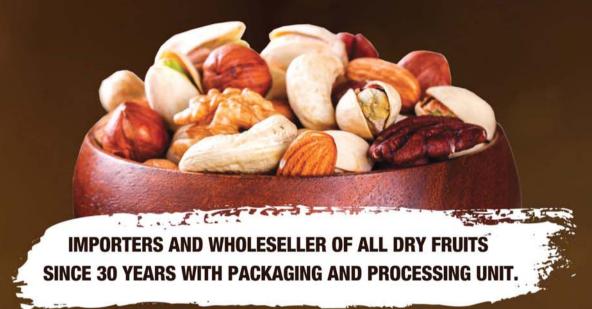
Innovations: Innovation is yet another very effective marketing tool for the brand. On average, L'Opéra produces around 30-40 new products every year. Apart from introducing the Salon de Thé concept, it has also innovated and experimented with the décor of its outlets in Bikaner House, Green Park, GK2, Defence Colony, Max Towers, and Aerocity, apart from renovating its flagship store in Khan Market.

**Customer Service:** Apart from ensuring 100% food quality and hygiene, L'Opéra has trained its staff to add that extra personal touch to the service right from the moment guests enter the outlet until the time they step out.

#### Key achievement in the past year:

The introduction of Salon de Thé – a concept that augments the authentic French experience further with ample seating space – is the brand's key achievement in the past year. The brand is setting a new trend in the Indian delicatessen market with this fresh concept. The brand has also embarked upon a significant expansion programme which has witnessed five new outlets opened over the past 12 months. The flagship store of the brand in Khan Market also got renovated to give it a fresh new look.





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In our new formats, we have added new French light meals to an expanded menu for those outlets where there is sufficient infrastructure, introduced eggless variety and vegan collection that can be prepared without losing their French authenticity.



are delivered fresh. Temperature control again plays a significant role here, especially in cities like Delhi where weather changes are extreme and that makes it even more difficult in summer. Not to forget the infamous traffic jams and other externalities.

L'Opéra has its own fleet of vehicles for delivery. It gives the brand considerable flexibility to keep the quality under check. There are no shortcuts and formulas when it comes to supply chain and quality control. "One must become proficient at reading the reality, openly consult with the relevant staff about the challenges, clarify the lessons learned, and then vigorously apply them in future," says Laurent.

# Deploying technology to make business more efficient and customer friendly

At the back-end side, the brand is operating with an ERP and its systems and all processes are aligned through ERP. This enables the system to look at any information with high granularity to improve its efficiency. "We use Navision with LS Retail. We are also working with analytics agencies to understand our consumers better for sharper insights on their behavior and buying patterns. We believe that this information, coupled with our loyalty program will help us in engaging with our customers extensively. There is also an App, which is in the pipeline that should help us reach out to our customers in a more customized, direct way," reveals Laurent.

# Innovations in the format and localisation for Indian customers

They say, 'Don't fix something that is not broken'. Value addition has to make sense and has to add to the overall experience of the customer. It can be only be useful if it connects with the aspirations and the lifestyle of the customer. As the lifestyle evolves,



value additions will evolve too and will keep taking on different shapes. "Our customers expect a certain level of consistency from L'Opéra, not only in the rigor and quality of service, but in the coherence and authenticity of the whole experience. Having said that, agility, adaptation and flexibility are key features of any successful venture that must not be neglected. In our new formats, we shall certainly add new French light meals to an expanded menu for those outlets where there is sufficient infrastructure, introduce our eggless variety and vegan collection that can be prepared without losing their French authenticity," says Laurent.

He adds: "Localization is important for success; however, it should not dilute the uniqueness of the brand and its product, or the French authenticity of the experience we offer. It is extremely important to understand this and manifest the same in your offerings. We launched a special range of macarons last Diwali, which was an instant hit. We looked at the essence of our culinary culture during the festive season and came up with flavors like honey & saffron, rose, cardamom & white chocolate, apricot & vanilla, cinnamon & nutmeg, fig & walnut. In the future, we will be innovating along similar lines and adapt to the local flavors without compromising on our commitment to upholding authentic French taste and ambiance."

L'Opéra has also developed a range of vegan products and eggless macarons, which it shall introduce to coincide with Navratras this festive season. The range will certainly delight those customers who were looking for delicious offerings in compliance with their traditional and religious culinary customs and habits. **PG** 



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# Juices and soft drinks: Making the right selection

Most Indian consumers consider packaged fruit drinks to be healthy but it is important to read labels carefully or these packaged drinks could lead to lifestyle diseases. It is also important to know how much sugar these drinks contain because most drinks are high on sugar and so are considered unhealthy.

By Dr. Saurabh Arora

hether it is festive celebrations at home, at the club, a corporate event or a celebration in your housing society, it is important to provide guests with the right choice of healthy and safe beverages. There is a vast array of branded juice and soft drink options, which include fruit juices, fruit drinks, milk-based drinks, carbonated drinks, water and soda-based drinks and nectars. In recent times, fruit juices have taken a lead as many consumers prefer these to other beverages. They are also being included in festive gift hampers along with dry fruits, snacks and chocolates. Here are some tips for selecting fruit juices and beverages that are healthy and safe to consume.

#### Types of fruit drinks available

In India, many sweetened drinks are marketed on a large scale. But out of these, some of them are erroneously labelled 'fruit juice.' The truth is that many of these drinks have only a small percentage of fruit content and some others contain only fruit flavours. In fact, such drinks should actually be called fruit drinks, fruit beverages, fruit nectars or flavoured drinks and not be labelled as 'fruit juices'. Here are some facts that are largely unknown about fruit drinks:

- Fruit drinks have 5-10 per cent of fruit content, which could be pulp or juice and could contain added flavour, colour, preservative, sugar and water etc.
- Carbonated fruit drinks are similar to fruit drinks and contain 5-10 per cent of fruit content but with soda.

- Fruit nectars have 20 per cent fruit juice content.
- Fruit juices, on the other hand, are composed of hundred per cent fruit content but could either contain added sugar of up to 5 per cent or could have no added sugar.
- Fresh juice means that it does not contain any additives, flavours or juices that have undergone a concentration process. Fresh juices are not pasteurized, are not stored frozen and contain no frozen juice. They have a short shelf-life.

Some juices like kiwi, lemon, lime, blackcurrant or other sour juice generally do not have 100 per cent juice and are diluted with water and could contain added sugar of up to 20 per cent so as to give a desired taste that appeal to consumers.

Most fruit drinks contain added sugar, but 100 per cent fruit juices must contain only natural sugar. So, when selecting the right drink for healthy consumption, the best is 100 per cent fruit juice without added sugar, followed by a fruit drink with low sugar content and high quantity of fruit content and, then, fruit drinks such as lime & lemon with at least 5 per cent fruit content and others that have at least 10% fruit content. Last in the order are flavoured drinks as they contain no fruit content but only fruit flavours. For healthconscious consumers, it makes sense to keep at arm's length from flavoured drinks because all that they contain are sugar & water (Dr. P.K. Vats, Food Safety Expert and Vice-President at Auriga Research).

# Are fruit juices and drinks free of contaminants?

Most of us are unaware of the kind of contaminants that can enter juices through agricultural practices, during handling, processing, storage and transportation. Contaminants can enter fruits if good manufacturing and hygiene and sanitation practices are not maintained all along the food chain, from farm to consumer.

# Microbial contamination in juices

Fruits have a short shelf life and harmful pathogens from contaminated fresh fruit can enter fruit juices at any time during handling, preparation and processing. Salmonella typhi, the pathogen that causes typhoid, can reach apple and orange juices through cross-contamination and poor sanitation practices. Salmonella, Escherichia coli and Cryptosporidium may cause outbreaks of gastroenteritis, if juices are not pasteurized. Moreover, improperly packaged fruit juices and soft drinks encourages growth of fungi and moulds.

Juice manufacturers normally pasteurise juices with a quick high-heat treatment. This way they are free from pathogens, yeast and moulds and pasteurization extends the shelf life to between 9-12 months, depending on the packaging. So, buying pasteurised juices help prevent food-borne illnesses. Nowadays, some juices are cold-pressed and these need to be stored with temperature controls or they will get contaminated. Cold-pressed juices that are in the open should not be bought unless they are from freezers and chillers.





### Chemical contamination

Fresh fruits are susceptible to chemical contamination as insecticides are sprayed on them to prevent pest infusion. Aldrin, DDT, Dicofol, Malathion and Pyrethrinsare are some of the many pesticides that can enter juices. Chemical contaminants can also be leached in juices and soft drinks from packaging material like cans. Tomato juice is particularly susceptible to lead contamination, while juice from orange, grape, tomato, pineapple and lemon must be tested for copper, arsenic and tin. Apple juice and apple juice ingredients used in other beverages could contain patulin, which occurs because of mould growth. Exposure to excessive chemical contaminants can lead to some serious health issues and so the Food Regulator FSSAI has fixed the maximum limits for chemical contaminants. Consumers are therefore advised to buy fruit juices and other soft drinks only from FBOs that are licensed as they can be trusted to follow food safety guidelines. Licensed FBOs carry out regular testing of products, so chemical contaminants are within regulatory limits.

## Food colours and preservatives

Most natural juices do not contain artificial colouring; however, carbonated drinks, fruit drinks and fruit beverages could contain permitted colours, which are indicated on labels. FSSAI has permitted the use of artificial colours like Canthaxanthin, Annatto, Ponceau 4R, Carmoisine, Erythrosine, Tartarzine, Sunset Yellow FCF, Indigo Carmine, Brilliant Blue FCF and Fast Green FCF. FSSAI has also permitted the use of preservatives called sulphites like sulphuric dioxide, Benzoites like benzoic acid and sorbates like sorbic acid in carbonated and other soft drinks. Since these

**Contaminants** can enter fruits if good manufacturing and hygiene and sanitation practices are not maintained all along the food chain, from farm to consumer.



# **Food Safety**



**FSSAI** has laid down the standards that beverage manufacturers must follow to ensure juices and soft drinks and other non-alcoholic beverages and carbonated drinks provided by them are fit for human consumption.

artificial colours and preservatives are chemicals, they can cause health problems when used in excess. Buy fruit juices and soft drinks only from licensed FBOs as they must be following the regulatory guidelines of using only permitted colours and preservatives within specified limits. Also, the use of these colours will be mentioned on labels.

# Make sure to select the right juice/drink?

FSSAI has laid down the standards that beverage manufacturers must follow to ensure juices and soft drinks and other non-alcoholic beverages and carbonated drinks provided by them are fit for human consumption. However, consumers can also contribute to food safety by checking the packaging and labels on all drink packages. Packaging must be checked for physical damage like dents, breakages, etc., as rupture of the container can lead to microbial contamination. Check that the seal is not broken on the inside of juice cartons.

# What to check for on labels

A look at the list of ingredients and nutritional facts will give a true picture about the fruit content, quantity of sugar and other substances and additives used in the drinks like colours, preservatives and flavours. Make sure to check:

- List of ingredients: The ingredients are always
  mentioned in the descending order of their
  composition by weight or volume. There could be
  additives to the fruit juice like water, sugar, salt,
  herbs and other permitted additives.
- The name of the juice and whether it is 100 per cent fruit juice or fruit drink, as the fruit drink will only contain a percentage of fruit and the rest could be water, soda, etc.
- Nutritional information on the percentage of sugar: Juices labelled beverage, drink, or cocktail often contain added sugars like high-fructose corn syrup. Fruits naturally contain sugar, so for 100 per cent juices, the sugar listed on the label should be shown as carbohydrate but not added sugar. If



sugar content is more than 1.5 per cent then the word 'sweetened' has to be mentioned on the label.

- Manufacturing/Packaging Date
- · Best Before Date
- Veg and Non-Veg Logo
- The name and address of the manufacturer/ packer along with the FSSAI Logo and License Numbers
- Net Quantity

#### **Understanding labels**

- Concentrate: Fruit juice that has been concentrated by removing some of the water content by heating. Flavours and Vitamin C may be added to replace those lost in processing.
- Reconstituted: Fruit juice prepared by adding water to concentrate.
- Not from concentrate (NFC): The juice does not have any water removed or added back. It may be pasteurised.
- Pure: The juice is not from concentrate that does not contain additives but could be a combination of fruit juices.
- 100 per cent: Pure and not from concentrate juices. If reconstituted from concentrate, the label will say '100% juice from concentrate' or '100% reconstituted fruit juice'.
- Natural: The juice does not contain food additives unless they are naturally occurring components and do not have any part removed or changed.

#### Conclusion

Since fruit-based drinks have become popular, all health-conscious consumers should select and choose their packaged juices and soft drinks wisely. **PG** 



The writer is founder of Food Safety Helpline www.foodsafetyhelpline. com and has a number of national and international research publications and patents to his credit.





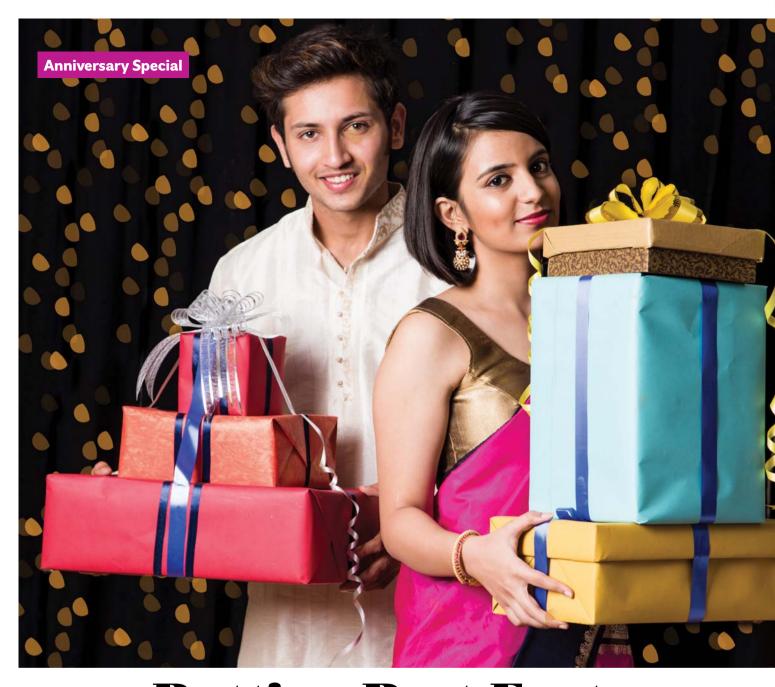
# Articulating the Big Picture Conversations on Food & Grocery Retail

The month of September holds a special significance for all of us. It marks the arrival of the Great Indian Festival Season beginning with Rakshabandhan and Janmashtami, and revving up with Dussehra and Diwali before reaching the climax with Christmas and New Year.

In a happy coincidence, September is also the month that Progressive Grocer India was launched. The first edition of the magazine – acknowledged as the 'Voice of F&G Retail Industry in India' – rolled out 12 years ago, in September 2007.

So, could there be a better idea to commemorate Progressive Grocer's 12th Anniversary than by serenading and feting the beginning of our festive season whose biggest drawing card is the 'theme and tradition of gifting'? It is during the festive season that the tradition and theme of gifting is at its strongest. That is because gifting is a medium that helps people to develop and establish a special emotional connect with friends, family, relatives and others while partaking of the joy and happiness of festivals.

To mark this opportune occasion and to celebrate our anniversary issue and the arrival of the 2019 festive season in India, Progressive Grocer brings out a special section featuring leading retailers and manufacturers on their plans and ideas to prep up for the 'Gifting Season' and their theme-centric gifting options for customers.



# **Putting Best Foot** Forward for the Festive Gifting Season

According to market surveys, there is a 25 per cent increase in the average monthly spend of shoppers on staples and packaged foods during the three months of the festive season (October-December), compared to the average monthly spend in the previous six months until September. No surprise that retailers and manufacturers hope to do significantly more business in the festive season than in the regular months and expect better business in terms of sales traction, consumer connect, branding, etc.

By Sanjay Kumar

he festive season is a period of spreading joy and happiness and gifting has become a characteristic and intrinsic feature of the festive season. Whether it's Rakshabandhan, Diwali or New Year, we love to celebrate it, and given the Indian culture and traditions, gifting holds a very important place for each and every festive occasion. Gifts help to spread the joy of festivities with our near and dear ones. In this fast-paced life, we occasionally get time to meet and greet our friends, relatives or business associates and gifts are a beautiful way to keep up and nurture our relationships. Festive season, through the medium of gifting, helps in nourishing our connections and this is a theme that plays across all product categories.

Both retailers and manufacturers aver that gifts have come to occupy an important part in our lives and gifting builds human relationships. "In the festive season, gifts occupy an important part as they help to cement ties and build bonds. In the food category, people like to shop for value offering items that have unique flavors and product combinations," says Laxmichand Gada of Mumbaibased Society Stores. As the festive season is a period of buoyancy in consumer sentiment, the purchasing power of consumers is at its peak because there is a lot of gifting to be done. No surprise then that retailers and manufacturers expect to see a minimum sales hike of 10-20 percent during this period.

According to market surveys, shoppers resort to a higher spend in almost all key categories - a 25 per cent increase in average monthly spend on staples and packaged foods during the three months of the festive season (October-December), compared to the average monthly spend in the previous six months till September. It is estimated that there is a 12 per cent increase in spend on groceries and a 50 per cent increase in spend on apparels in the October to December compared to the three months ending September.

Sometime ago, industry body Assocham came out with a report that said consumers are expected to splurge about Rs. 52,000 crore on shopping during the festive season, beginning with Navaratra and continuing well up to Christmas. Historically, shoppers tend to spend more during the festive season and their spending during the holiday season is often exuberant and unrestrained. A large percentage of consumers set aside a budget for their festival spending for buying gifts for themselves, children, family, friends and relatives.

As consumer today have high expectations and at the same time are looking forward to innovation in terms of new line of gifting options



in place, retailers, brands and manufacturers hope to do significantly more business than in the regular months and are nursing high hopes from the ensuing festive season in terms of better sales traction, consumer connect, branding, etc. Considering that they already receive great response through advance orders, they are looking to bag significantly higher volumes during the festive season and roll their inventories. In fact, for many retailers, festive season gifting and shopping accounts for about 40 per cent of annual sales.

Delhi-NCR based 24 SEVEN convenience stores chain anticipates a surge in business during the festive season this year as has been customary in the past as well. Executives at the retail chain aver that, in general, business fares much better this time around as the consumer sentiment is more upbeat and shoppers spend not only on gifting others but on the self as well. That is why retail sales during the festive months have traditionally outperformed business activity in rest of the year, and this spike in consumer activity bodes well for businesses in general and the retail industry in particular.

Shoppers enjoy the mass festive sales as many of them hunt for good bargains and merrily part with their money in festive cheer. To meet this trend, 24 SEVEN portfolio will also be brimming with new items and will see the return of favorite hot sellers from last year to satisfy the overall gifting needs. The stores will also be decked up during this period to convey the joy, happiness and spirit of the season. The chain is also working on joint business plans with the brands - from creating unique assortment to special offerings and to bring about improvement in its fill rate - with the sole agenda of connecting more meaningfully and reaching out to its customers in bigger ways this festive season as compared to the previous years.





We are optimistic that with growing awareness and consciousness for healthier alternatives and eating options, the entire gamut of health products including gluten-free grains, honey, roasted and baked snacks, etc, to grow exponentially this season.

-Kunaal Kumar Promoter, Modern Bazaar



# CAN FESTIVE SPIRIT LIFT THE MARKET MOOD?

Many sections of the industry believe that the creeping fears of a deepening economic slowdown along with a bleak outlook for the job market could act a dampener in perking up consumer spirits this festive season. According to one industry report, almost 70 percent of the country's middle and lower income families will curtail their expenses during this festive season due to less job avenues, and lower salary packages. "An overwhelming majority of middle and lower income families in the country will be forced to rip their spends this festive season than the last year mainly because of the pervasive economic downturn. Consumers will slash their festive budget to meet their monthly expenses first," says the study. The study finds that on average the middle and lower middle income families spent 29 percent of their salary during the festive season. However, if brands would offer more incentives by way of discounts or freebies during the festive season, customers would spend more, according to the study.

However, some like **Neha Manekia**, **Director of Mumbai based Silverspoon Gourmet** (which is positioned as an experiential gourmet experience), expect a good season despite the wary and bearish outlook of the broader market staring at the prospects of a prolonged consumption slowdown. "I think that if anything, Diwali is the one season where people go all out even if there is recession. They may cut back on other things but from a business and personal standpoint, Diwali gifting is a social norm more than it being a religious festival." She adds, "People are always looking for something new. For those who like to stay away from 'safe' options and try something different and other than fruits and mithai, we have a lot of options, both in terms of packaging and food gifts."

According to the data from market research agency Nielsen, notwithstanding the current slowdown, Indian consumers seem confident about the future. The agency says that India topped the global consumer confidence index in April-June at 138, the highest in six quarters, coming at a time when domestic economic growth has fallen sharply. The Nielsen findings are in contrast to the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) consumer confidence index and gross domestic product growth numbers released by the government recently, which showed that India's economy had slowed to 5 per cent — a steady decline over a year. What's more worrying is that growth in private consumption – the key engine of growth – fell sharply to 3.1 per cent.

Yet, Nielsen sys it remains optimistic about the months ahead. "Growth of 10 per cent in terms of value for the domestic fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) market is still among the strongest in the world. There are not many markets where we are seeing this kind of growth rate despite it being down versus the previous quarters for the domestic FMCG industry," says Patrick Dodd, Global President and Chief Commercial Officer, Nielsen. "This is a strong indicator to me of the FMCG consumption here and the prospects for the future," says Dodd.

## Gifting in the food category

Food has always been a popular gifting category irrespective of any season. Sales of food items have always been very profitable during the festival season. The credit for higher sales during the period is due to the exciting range of products alongside attractive offers by retailers. Not surprising that retailers, manufacturers and brands are focusing on coming out with attractive gift packs and new product launches. The festive season is also important for F&B companies to assess their future sales and growth plans. Their focus is going to be on new product launches in the branded category to attract consumers. Many companies use festivals as a connection moment with consumers to launch new packs. "Diwali is the most important gifting season of the year, but over the years, it has become extremely crucial to focus on a variety of options. So, we offer both pre-packed gift hampers, and customized hampers," says Laxmichand Gada of Society Stores.

With gifting being an indispensable part of the festive season, gifting in the food category has traditionally been dominated by sweets, dried fruits and chocolates. However, in recent years, the gifting segment has grown and expanded considerably and now includes myriad product categories, even within the food segment. No wonder that markets suddenly come alive with an array of 'giftables' during the festive months. Though the season continues to be strongly dominated by sweets, chocolates, dry fruits and snacks, sales of non-traditional products like tortilla packs, exotic teas, coffee and fruits, jams, honey, saffron, marshmallows, crackers, sauces, wines, etc, have picked up sharply in recent years.

Says Amit Lohani, MD, Max Foods, "We see a huge surge in demand for international food products as they present a mark of exclusivity and uniqueness when it comes to gifting. Most Indian companies ape international product categories and envisage them in their product range. As importers, we try to understand international trends, and bring in new categories to tantalize the taste buds of the aspirational Indian consumer."







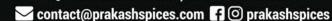
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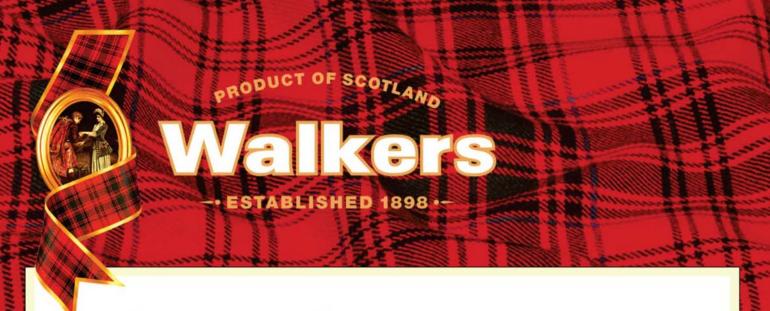
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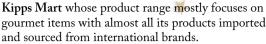
We see a huge surge in demand for international food products as they present a mark of exclusivity and uniqueness, when it comes to gifting. As importers, we try to understand international trends, and bring in new categories to tantalize the tastebuds of the aspirational Indian consumer.

> —**Amit Lohani** MD, Max Foods

Today, gift-ready packs, high on hygiene and variety, have successfully engaged the consumers, and helped companies like Nestle, Britannia, Perfetti, Mondelez gain a bigger market share during the festive season. Cadbury has been ruling the chocolate gift packs market with close to 70 percent share followed by Nestle with 30 percent of the country's Rs. 10,000 crore chocolate market. At Big Bazaar and Spencer's, imported brands contribute 40 to 45 percent to the overall chocolate sales during the festive season. As per a report by Nielsen, per capita consumption of chocolates has grown from 40 grams in 2008 to 150 grams in 2017. In most markets of the world, chocolate gifting accounts for 14 to 35 percent of the total chocolate market, but in India it is barely 6 percent.

Consumer gifting in food space is a very big market and growing at a very healthy rate. Therefore, in spite of competition, brands with good positioning and differentiators are growing quite well. While most brands continue to focus on quality and packaging and on new promotions to create excitement with the trade and the consumers, they are also focusing on developing value offerings and product lines with the affordability mindset in order to drive higher sales. Bringing in smaller packs at lower price points is a good way to gain volumes and be able to reach out to the masses.

Ludhiana-based Kipps Mart is preparing to roll out the red carpet this festive season. "Every year, we expect something new and exciting to enter the market in the festive season. This year too, we are planning some innovative ideas for the coming months and expecting a good response from customers. We are looking to combine the occasion of Diwali with the wedding season this year, which witnesses a gifting spree and a boom in the demand for items like gift baskets. At the moment the market is dull but we expect things to pick up in due course," says Hitesh Arora, Director,

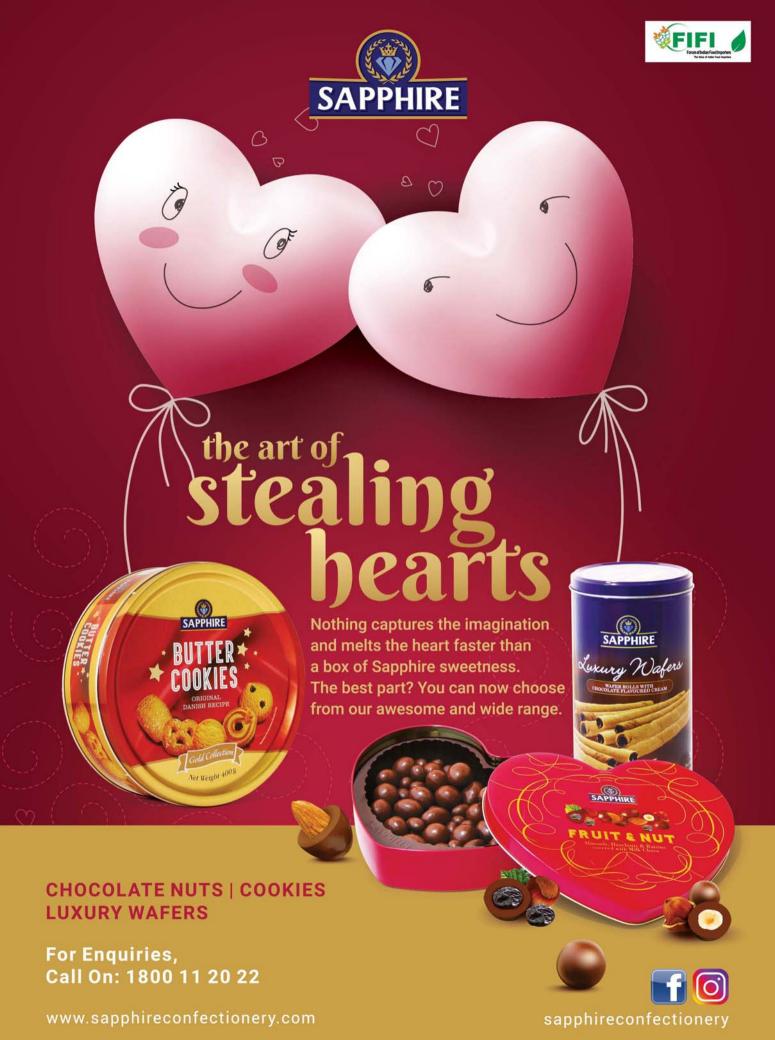


"Flavorful and exotic drinks are popular with health-conscious and well-traveled consumers. Chia-based products have become best-sellers. Tea and coffee gifting items have also received a good response. We have a special gifting basket for tea, which has a selection of different flavors of tea and is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

Higher demand and sales of sweets, chocolates, cookies and confectionery have always marked the festive spirit. Says Kunaal Kumar of Delhi-NCR based Modern Bazaar, "We do see the demand for chocolates, cookies and snacks grow higher in the festive season with improved availability. We are optimistic that with growing awareness and consciousness for healthier alternatives and eating options, the entire gamut of health products including gluten-free grains, honey, roasted and baked snacks, etc, to grow exponentially this season." In recent years, though a shift away from traditional sweets, cookies and confectionery has been noticed, sales of the latter remain strong and continue to dominate the market. With the trend of gifting also catching up in smaller towns and cities and in the rural areas as well, baked confectionery has emerged as preferred gifting category, mainly due to the price positioning. As a mass consumption item, cookies and sweets enjoy huge acceptability amongst people from diverse background.

FMCG companies like PepsiCo, Parle, Coca-Cola are gearing up offer innovative gift products during the festive season, apart from their regular product offerings. New product innovation, creating consumer mindset about new products, enhancing the reach through both e-tail and retail, designing variety options, and bundling products based on consumer preference are the focus areas for players wishing to tap new consumer segments during the long festive season. Nature's Basket, for instance, will offer food and gourmet gift hampers, which are occasion-specific and customizable.





# **Anniversary Special**



66

Every year,
we expect
something new
and exciting to
enter the market
in the festive
season. This
year too, we are
planning some
innovative ideas
for the coming
months and
expecting a good
response from
customers.

—Hitesh AroraDirector, Kipps Mart

#### Trends in Gifting

Customers are moving towards gift items that are personalized, classy, have a good shelf life, and which come in attractive packaging.

The gifting industry in India has registered a strong growth over the past decade thanks to rising income levels and aspirations. The evolution of the Indian customer has played a key role in bringing about this change, as this customer has both the willingness and the ability to pay for innovative products. The surge in economic growth, rising disposable incomes and aspirations, increasing exposure to global trends, and long distance gifting are some of the factors bringing about this shift towards premium upgrades. At the same time, personal gifting is on the rise and an ever-higher number of occasions are being added to the tally which includes not only anniversaries and birthdays, but also such ones as Valentine's day, Father's day, and Mother's day, among a long list. The consumers of today want a touch of style, uniqueness, and personalization in their gift items, in order to match their status.

The market is currently experiencing a revolution, with new product innovations, both in the food and non-food segment, accompanied by attractive packaging. Non-food personal gifting, which was largely restricted to bed-sheets and small electronic items, now includes attractive candles, other home décor items, soft toys, personalized gifts, gift vouchers, artificial jewelry, artworks, etc. At the same time, food gifting has a wider ambit and includes innovative hampers for such occasions as birthday, festivals, etc. as well as various product types including fruit hampers, cookies, organic food, coffee and tea, cheese and meat hampers, wine, different types of cheese, jams and jellies, etc. From mithai to much more: A decade ago, food gifting was largely restricted to the traditional mithai, or sweets. But with the increasing incidence of adulteration in traditional sweets, customers are moving towards other product items which off er more consistent quality and good taste in tastefully



attractive packaging. Brands have played a key role in bringing about this transition. Cadbury's, for instance, has played an instrumental role in opening up the Indian consumer to the world of possibilities in the gifting space at a time when the market was largely restricted to sweets. Its innovative products (e.g, Celebrations), extensive reach, and attractive packaging have attracted evolved consumers in India for over two decades.

Having established itself, Cadbury's is now innovating to account for the growing demand for premium chocolates as gifting products. Ferrero is another manufacturer which has been successful in promoting luxury chocolates as a category in India through acquiring on–ground market understanding, ensuring extensive availability, focusing on prosperous consumers, and targeting occasions and festivities.

The home-made chocolates category has also registered high growth in the past few years, largely driven by occasion-specific gifting. These are distributed both from the makers' homes and confectionery shops as well as through wholesale and retail shops.

Visual appeal: Brands have also used attractive packaging to bring about this transition among consumers. Most of the decisions about food gifting items take place in stores and packaging plays a key role in these fast, split-second decisions. Increasingly, companies are innovating with their packaging to underline their premium nature, adherence to food protection and safety standards,

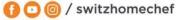
dynamism, the spirit of the occasion, etc. Given the importance of packaging in promoting sales, companies hire design teams and artists to create the right concept. Design, colors, and imagery play a vital role in this design process.

PepsiCo, for instance, was successful in projecting packaged juices as a gifting item owing largely to its attractive packaging. Other product categories, including Kurkure, Lay's, etc, also come up





info@india.switzgroup.com







In the festive season, gifts occupy an important part as they help to cement ties and build bonds. In the food category, people like to shop for value offering items that have unique flavours and product combinations.

**—Laxmichand Gada,** Promoter, Society Stores



with family packs/bundling, etc.

Readily available: It is worthwhile to note that only those companies that pay attention to their supply chain can reap exponential benefits during the festivity period. The adage 'supply creates its own demand' can come true in the festive season with companies whose products are readily available scoring higher in terms of customer preference. The customer is hassled by various commitments during the festive season and the decision to buy a product is generally a quick one. FMCG companies reinforce their supply chains to avoid delay in supplies and to readily occupy shelf space. Demand planning, inventory management, supply chain responsiveness, manufacturing agility and reliability, and logistics are some of the enablers on which the success or failure of a company depends, especially during the festival season.

A click away: Another trend, which largely mirrors other categories, is the rising importance of e-commerce in the gifting space. Large e-commerce

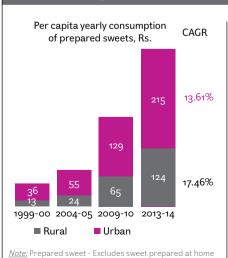
companies like Amazon.com and Snapdeal.com have specific sections dedicated to gifting. At the same time, most players in the offline space like Ferns and Petals, Nature's Basket, Foodhall, etc, are widening their online presence to capture the online gifting space. New, dedicated gifting portals have been launched to capture this space like giftease.com, giveter.com, indiangiftsportal.com, and wishpicker.com, to name a few. The offerings on these websites include bakery products, assorted chocolates, confectionary, dry fruits, sweets, and other gourmet products, apart from other categories like flowers, jewelry, watches, etc. With rising time paucity and ever-longer distances separating families, the role of e-commerce will only deepen in the future, thanks also to the rising penetration of Internet service providers.

The trends highlighted above are only expected to become magnified in the years to come, and can result in radical changes in the gifting space in terms of product offering, channels, packaging, events and occasions, customer needs, and brand innovations. It is an exciting time to be in the space and enjoy alongside customers who are also rejoicing in their happy occasions, while also innovating with them.

Retail analysts estimate that the gifting industry in India has registered strong growth over the past decade thanks to the rising income levels and aspirations. Also, aiding this growth are factors such as (on the demand side) the widening of the customer base, and (on the supply side) the offering of innovative products at attractive prices. Currently, the gifting market's size is estimated at close to USD 50 billion, with many industry players reporting annual growth in the range of 20-40 per cent during the festive months.

With so much at stake and so much to look forward to during the months ahead, the festive season this year has lots of promise in store for all – producers, consumers and retailers. In the pages to follow, read about what retailers and brands are proposing to do this festive season to woo consumers and make them shop like crazy. **PG** 

Consumption of prepared traditional sweets in India is increasing rapidly at around 17% CAGR in rural areas and 14% in urban areas, to create a market worth over Rs 19,000 crore



E-Estimated; *Source:* NSSO, Indian Census, Kanvic analysis

Market size of prepared sweet,
Rs. Crore. 2012-14

113. 61016, 2013 14	
Category	Market size
Rural	10,567
Urban	8,563
Total	19,130
·	





# The healthiest superfoods gift box this festive season



# Superfoods inside the box

- Tulsi Raw Honey
- 100% Pure A2 Cow Ghee with Turmeric and Curcumin (First time in India)
- Dried Cranberries
- Roasted Cashews

Range starts @ Rs. 350 + taxes

# Why companies choose our box

- Wide range of innovative health foods
- Premium quality, unique ingredients
- High quality sustainable packaging
- Easy and safe to transport
- Affordably priced, premium health products
- White labeling for bulk orders

# Akiva Superfoods introduces a nutritious range of premium quality but affordable products

Company and brand profile: Akiva Superfoods is a modern superfoods brand with a range of high quality, healthy and tasty products. It is one of the fastest growing wellness food FMCG companies in India focused on bringing a wide range of innovative, trustworthy, familiar and high-quality food items that are ideal for on-the-move and kitchen-dining-table consumption. The products are nutrient rich and contain premium ingredients.

Gifting range for this festive season: The brand has a range of super healthy, high quality products that will be offered in gift boxes of two sizes - Small Box of Health (containing 100 gm ghee, 150 gm honey, 55 gm cashews and 65 gm cranberries) and Big Box of Health (containing 170 gm ghee, 250 gm honey, 90 gm cashews and 100 gm cranberries). The brand's unique 'Box of Health' comes with four amazing products - Tulsi raw honey; 100% pure A2 cow ghee with turmeric and curcumin (first time in India); dried cranberries; and roasted cashews - which make for a perfect bundle of healthy gifting.



Akiva Superfoods has curated festive gift boxes that are suited for both corporate clients and individual festive gift buyers. These wellpriced gift boxes can be customized as per the client's needs subject to a minimum order quantity.

- Karan Dokras Lead, New Products and Sales, Akiva Superfoods



What make the products ideal for gifting: Akiva Superfoods gift packs are beautiful, sustainable, easy to transport and contain nutritious, premium quality products. Its 100% pure cow ghee is made of A2 milk, a staple ingredient in Indian meals; the raw tulsi honey is certified pure and is the healthiest form of honey available in the market; dried cranberries are a very good source of vitamins and mineral; roasted cashews are a great protein source and customary in all Indian festivities. The brand's healthy gifting range is a perfect way to celebrate togetherness with family and loved ones. Besides, the company also offers the option of customizing the packaging and white-labeling for large corporate orders.

What's new this festive season: Akiva Superfoods has introduced new products under its festive range. The brand is offering innovative, sustainable gift packs with a highly nutritious range of products that are premium in quality, yet affordable. The products on offer have regular dayto-day usage and hence they are sure to be loved and unlikely to be passed on.

Value-addition in gifting products over traditional products: The gifting products are available in durable, high quality, ecofriendly packaging. Also, these products are packaged in smaller, sleeker, beautifully designed containers. The products are

innovative and are meant for day-to-day consumption. Roasted cashews and dried cranberries are exclusively available in festive gift boxes.

# Categories of gifting options on offer:

The brand will offer premium products at affordable prices. The gift boxes are available in two sizes with prices starting from Rs. 350 and going up to Rs. 1200.

#### Gifting option for corporate clients:

Akiva Superfoods has curated festive gift boxes that are suited for both corporate clients and individual festive gift buyers. These well-priced gift boxes can be customized as per the client's needs subject to a minimum order quantity.

Gifting range contribution to overall sales during the festive season: The company is looking at a 25-30% contribution to its overall sales from the gifting range during the festive season.

Timeline and retail reach of the gifting range: Akiva Superfoods' festive range will be available in the gift sections at major retail chains and e-commerce platforms. Its gift boxes will be available until February next year for corporate clients and wedding partners.

The company has a pan-India base and a large section of its customers belongs to Tier II cities. The gift boxes will be available on the company's website, www. akivasuperfoods.com and on leading e-com platforms for delivery across India.

Plans for communicating the gifting options to the consumer base: Akiva Superfoods has tied up with wedding planners and corporate gifting partners and will also be taking up sampling and sales of festive boxes at selected corporate offices, Durga Puja pandals and Diwali exhibitions across Delhi-NCR.

Expectations from the gifting season this **year:** The brand expects its gifting range to add about 8-10% to its annual topline in the next five months, with a decent contribution coming in the next month.



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# \*Cornitos offers healthy snack products for everyone

Company and brand profile: GreenDot Health Foods Pvt. Ltd was the first company to launch nacho crisps in Indian snacks under the brand name Cornitos. Apart from nacho crisps, Cornitos' brand portfolio covers products such as taco shells, specialty sauces, roasted nuts - cashews & almonds, coated green peas and pickles - jalapeno peppers & gherkins. The overarching feature of all Cornitos products is their health attribute. Cornitos is a healthy choice and for people from all age groups and all walks of life.

## Gifting range for this festive season:

Cornitos has a wholesome range of nacho crisps, dips, nuts & seeds - a perfect indulgence and gifting option. The brand provides modern gift offerings with a unique value proposition. This festive season, Cornitos has come out with a range of innovative gifting options - Nachos Fiesta, Festive Blaast and Party Pack. These products are available in attractive gift packs with exquisite packaging and are targeted towards all health-conscious consumers looking for value without categorization.

What's new this festive season: This festive season, Cornitos has launched products that cater to the interests of all customer segments. This year, the brand has tried to absorb the packaging cost and not charge extra from the customers. It will also launch a special gift pack, which will be reasonably priced at Rs. 160 and will come at no extra packaging cost. Cornitos gift packs have been designed to target all groups of people under the healthy snacking category and stand out for their taste differentiators.

What makes the products ideal for gifting: Cornitos' 'box of joy', themed specially crafted gourmet selection is designed to enliven the spirit of



**Cornitos gifting products will** also be accessible to smaller towns and cities through the online channels and we expect the sales to be better than the previous years.

- Vikram Agarwal Director, Greendot Health Foods Pvt. Ltd.

festivities. The gift packs have nacho crisps packs in varied exotic flavors, making them ideal for gifting and family gettogethers. The gift packs not only provide value to the customers, they come in attractive packaging and in combinations of exciting flavors and products for delightful munching moments in the festive season.

Categories of gifting options: The gift packs are available in the affordable, premium, and in the luxury range with prices starting at Rs. 160 and going up to Rs. 1,000 for customized packaging. Gift packs in the affordable range contain nacho crisps priced at MRP 160. The brand will also launch a 9-pack gift box of coated green peas in hot and spicy and wasabi flavors priced at MRP 180.

The premium range gift packs comprise: • Nacho Fiesta gift pack with four exotic flavors of nacho crisps with 4 cups of salsa dip combo. This offering comes with two nacho crisp packs

of 150 gm and 60 gm each; • Diamond shaped 'Party Pack', with its exotic nacho crisps & party nut collection priced at MRP 325; • 6-pack gift box of roasted premium cashews in lightly salted and crack pepper flavor priced at MRP 300; • 6-pack gift box of roasted California almonds in lightly salted flavor priced at MRP 300; • 9-pack gift box of roasted and salted pumpkin seeds priced at MRP 360.

Gift packs in the luxury range include: • 3-jar gift trays of exotic flavored nuts in 100 gm jars priced around MRP 600; · Customized gift trays with all assorted Cornitos products consisting of nacho crisps, nuts, tacos and dips priced around MRP 1500 to 2500.

Gifting option for corporate clients: For corporate customers, Cornitos has planned customized gift trays in three sizes - small, medium and large. These aesthetically designed trays will have all assorted Cornitos products consisting of nacho crisps, nuts, tacos and dips priced around MRP 600 to 2500.

Gifting range contribution to overall sales during the festive season: Cornitos gifting range make up for 20-25% of its overall sales during the festive season.

# New concepts for the gifting range:

Cornitos has worked on new concepts to make its gift packs unique in packaging and have better visibility on the shelf. Its gift packs' unique packaging will definitely play a major role in creating a buzz for the products. The premium design of the gift pack is reflected in the vibrant colors along with its festive theme.

#### Retail reach of the gifting range:

Cornitos is a most loved product on many leading online grocery stores and is available on Amazon.in, Bigbasket, Grofers, to name a few.

Plans for communicating the gifting options to the consumer base: The brand has a media plan in place and will increase its marketing spend during the festive season. It will be making use of radio, social media, print ads, in-store branding, and Diwali exhibitions to reach out to consumers.









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# Dukes cookies & chocolates range for your loved ones

Company and brand profile: The Dukes brand is operated by Ravi Foods Pvt. Ltd, which has a formidable product range including biscuits, wafers, chocolates and other confectionery items. The company is a global exporter, catering to markets in over 50+ countries, including the US, Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Dukes products are of international standards, which has helped the company grow its share in both the domestic and overseas markets.

# Gifting range for this festive season:

Dukes has a wide variety and range of gifting options curated to suit the taste, preference and aesthetics of consumers during the festive season. The range consists mainly of premium cookies, centre-filled chocolate, and chocolatecoated dry fruits. In cookies, Dukes has Danish butter cookies under the brand name "Utsav", gourmet cookies, assorted premium cookies under the brand name "Cookie Empire", apart from some mouth watering chocolate ranging from "Dukes Truffle Chocolates" with centre-filled hazelnut/butterscotch/caramel, and also a "rich dry fruit collection".



We have entered into strategic tie-ups with major retail and online platforms to make the products visible and attractive during the festive season. We will also take up BTL activations in select locations to create a memorable consumer experience for our gifting range products.

> - Arvind Kumar CEO, Dukes India

What make the products ideal for gifting: Dukes gifting range comes in varied packs and designs, which gives consumers the options to choose as per the needs and budget; consumers can also choose from a wide range of flavors/ variants /fillings to surprise their loved ones with Dukes cookies and chocolates range; All products are crafted and designed to deliver great value for the consumer's money; Dukes also customizes and co-brands the gifting range for special corporate/institutional customers.

What's new this festive season: This festive season, Dukes is bringing in lots of excitement with its "New Cookie Empire Range" of premium assorted cookies and "Yummy" chocolate packs containing assorted flavors and fillings. The brand has also enhanced its gifting range according to the feedback it received from customers and consumers.

Value-addition in gifting products over traditional products: Dukes does not mix its regular/ traditional products with its gifting range, which are exclusive products and different in all aspects from ingredients selection and sourcing to their premium packaging and even the price points.

#### Gifting option for corporate clients:

Dukes understand the needs of corporates and will come out with separate packs designed for corporate customers, along with the option of customized solutions based on volumes and time lines.

Price points of the gifting range: Dukes Gifting range price points start from Rs. 120 and goes up to premium price points of Rs. 500+

Gifting range contribution to overall sales during the festive season: Gifting comprises one-third of Dukes' overall sales in Modern Trade during the festive season whereas the contribution from General Trade is slightly less.

## New concepts for the gifting range:

Dukes gifting range will have an all new youthful designs with vibrant packaging and colors options. The packaging and design of its gifting range is tailored to bring in a lot of vibrancy in combination with enticing visual consumption shots of products.

Timeline during which the gifting range will be available: Dukes gifting range is available throughout the year; however, the major months for sales of its gifting range this year is from August to October and December.

Retail reach of the gifting range: Dukes' distribution network gives it the advantage to penetrate deep with a multi-channel approach strategy across Modern trade, Cash & Carry, General Trade, E-tail and also the Institutional segments.

Plans for communicating the gifting options to the consumer base: Dukes gifting range enjoys a strong consumer base and acceptance. The brand has entered into strategic tie-ups with major retail and online platforms to make its products visible and attractive. It will also take up BTL activations in select locations to create a memorable consumer experience for its gifting range products.

Expectations from the gifting season this year: The brand is expecting to grow its gifting range sales in multiples over the last year.



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# Stay healthy with Kharawala's dry fruit gift range

Company and brand profile: Kharawala Products was founded by Shailesh Kharawala 30 years ago with just one product – Indian raisins. In just a few years, the business expanded to all dryfruits - nuts, dried fruits and seeds. Today, the company's operations extend to import and export of dry fruits and spices, corporate gifting, and supplies to HoReCa Industry and Modern Trade.

## Gifting range for this festive season:

Kharawala Products has a wide range of gifting options to cater to every customer segment. The price of the gifting range starts from Rs. 50 and goes up to Rs. 50,000.

What make the products ideal for gifting: Kharawala Products offer a lot of options to meet customers' gifting requirements. The brand offers customized option, varied packaging options, and a variety of range - from regular to premium quality of dry fruits. The brand sources gifting creatives from multiple vendors. Hence, there are different gifting boxes available to diversify the range, accordingly. The brand also provides absolutely hygienic environment for its products and the staff is well trained to maintain hygienic conditions under the FSSAI norms. The packing of products is done in an air-conditioned environment to avoid any kind of infestation.





We are offering not only the traditionally known dry fruits but also some exotic variants like macadamia, peanuts, Brazil nuts, and dried fruits like dried apricots, cranberry, kiwi, blueberry, apart from chia seeds, pumpkin seeds and sunflower seeds.

> - Shailesh Kharawala Proprietor, Kharawala Products

What's new with this year's gifting range: The brand has observed that many people do not opt for food products as gifts because of the shorter shelf life of food products. To overcome this challenge, the brand is offering gifting options with vacuum packed or nitrogen flushed packets, which ensures the shelf life of the product remains intact until the time the pack is opened.

Value-addition in gifting products over traditional products: Traditionally, gifting dry fruit means a 500 gram of box with almonds, cashews, pistas and raisins. Kharawala is offering not only the traditionally known dry fruits but also some exotic variants like macadamia, peanuts, Brazil nuts, and dried fruits like dried apricots, cranberry, kiwi, blueberry, apart from chia seeds, pumpkin seeds and sunflower seeds.

#### Categories of gifting options on offer:

The gifting range starts from as low as Rs. 50 for a 40 gm mix of nuts with raisins. This range is a very popular option for clients with a small budget but who still want to offer a premium gift. The packet is a nitrogen-flushed branded pouch, which gives a premium feel to the recipient.

Kharawala Products also has many other different gifting combinations with prices ranging from Rs. 300-Rs. 800. In the premium category, it is offering a branded gifting hamper of dry fruits packed in an attractive basket.

It also has a premium box of dry fruits besides offering customizable options where customers can decide on the dry fruits they would like to have and make the gift boxes accordingly. This option is given to a customer irrespective of the order size.

## Gifting option for corporate clients:

Corporate gifting constitutes 10% of its overall sales as the brand is well known amongst restaurants, confectionery brands and modern trade companies for over 30 years now.

It has designed a branded gift box wherein the customer can choose which product to put in the box. Customers are also given an option to put their brand logo or company name and details.

#### Retail reach of the gifting range:

The brand's gifting range is available in marketplaces like Ferns n Petals, Amazon, Flipkart, Paytm, Shopclues and Snapdeal. It is also delivering its products individually through phone/wtsap/email to enable its customers to call and place orders. The gifting range is also available for the customers at the shop-cumgodown at APMC, Vashi and customers can select from a range and variety available at different prices.

Plans for communicating the gifting options to the consumer base: The brand is actively indulging in marketing through social media platforms like Facebook page @dryfruitkart.in and Instagram page @dryfruit\_kart. However, this year, the brand has done marketing in print as well to drive more customers toward the brand. But, 95% of the brand's business is generated through word of mouth.

#### Expectations from the gifting season this

**year:** The brand is looking to a sales hike of at least 20% this festive season with its vacuum and nitrogen flushed packaging in the offerings and branded gift boxes.





RAJMA MASALA

DAL MAKHANI

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# Dugar's Sapphire gift range has 'sweet' surprises

Company and brand profile: Dugar Overseas Pvt. Ltd, is amongst India's leading import, manufacturing, distribution and marketing houses, managing a products portfolio across categories such as chocolates, cream wafers, candies, cookies, juices and more with a bevy of globally loved FMCG brands from Europe, South America and Asia.

Products in the gifting range: The range includes cookies and wafer sticks as well as gift boxes of chocolate-coated nuts, truffle-chocolate, and butter toffee, which come in attractive packaging and a wide range of designs, sizes and shapes.

What make the products ideal for gifting: The gifting range has been creatively crafted to account for all kinds of occasions, emotions and moments, which the festive season is likely to generate. There is something in the product range for everyone, regardless of the age and palate, apart from the products' premium quality, which make them suitable for gifting. For instance, Dugar's Sapphire confectionery gift boxes make for an ideal gifting range for friends, relatives, and also work colleagues. Its high-class packaging adds to the desirability, making it one of the apt gifts of the season. Finally, the company also offers many other delightful gifting options with value-for-money price – irrespective of one's budget.

Sapphires's packaging plays a critical role in building the allure and experience and in distinguishing the products from the clutter on the crowded supermarket shelf. A classy, detailed and carefully constructed design helps Sapphire's gift boxes sparkle with a distinct personality, adding an extra layer of pride and delight to the owner. The well-researched designs help the Sapphire gifting range to connect with the psyche of the intended target audience, while delivering an aesthetic appeal that's hard to resist. Of course, the design goes well beyond the looks, and the efficient design features help keep the product fresh and good-as-new, at all times.

What's new with this year's gifting range: In keeping with the spirit of the season - wherein everyone expects a gift to have a "Wow" factor - the company has planned to come out with a suite of 'sweet' surprises for all those who relish both owning and gifting Sapphire gift boxes: Dugar Overseas will be launching exciting new combo-packs and tins that make for perfect gifting and snacking companions be it tea times, private parties or gala celebrations.

Categories of gifting options on offer: The company has an exhaustive and inclusive product repertoire boasts of everything from small packs designed for the masses to larger more exclusive ones befitting premium occasions. A vast range of flavors, sizes and price tags make a box of Sapphire customized for the specific occasion it is being gifted for. The prices start from as low as Rs. 125 and goes up to Rs. 850.

Gifting option for corporate clients: The requirement of corporate clients has always been a priority for the company. As such, all its products are suitable for corporate needs. As a bonus, it is also happy to offer





This festive season, we plan to come out with a suite of 'sweet' surprises for all those who relish both owning and gifting Sapphire gift boxes. We will be launching exciting new combo-packs and tins that make for perfect gifting and snacking companions be it tea times, private parties or gala celebrations.

> – Sanjay Jain Director, Dugar Overseas Pvt. Ltd.

Timeline and retail reach of the gifting range: As they say, "a sapphire is for all seasons". Sapphire gifting range is available in all leading stores, malls and supermarkets throughout the year. The company is also targeting the smaller towns and cities for its gifting range, helped by its pan-India presence and a robust distribution channel network of more than 800 distributors. Dugar's products and its Sapphire gifting range are available in every single MTR and traditional style store. Besides, the company also ensures the correct placement of its products inside the store, making sure that a Sapphire is always 'unmissable'.

Plans for communicating the gifting options to the consumer base: The company is confident that its products will be top-of-mind for both the discerning and the impulsive customer during this festive season. To ensure this, it has put in place a well-crafted and strategically promoted brand communication program that utilizes a variety of channels. In particular, it is looking at point of sales and social media to deliver the maximum impact.



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# DC Johar & Sons offers a range of iconic brands with multi-faceted gifting options

Company and brand profile: D C Johar & Sons, set up in 1948, has today diversified into various sectors like distribution (national and regional), International trade, manufacturing and retailing for various companies like Nestle, HLL, Britannia, Parry's, GSK, TATA, Mi Xiaomi, Dish TV, Nikon Cameras, Arvind Garments, United Colours of Benetton, Kingfisher, United Spirits Limited (now Diego) as well as its own brand of alcoholic beverages - Johans - currently, one of the oldest brands in the state of Kerala, amongst others. The company represents many iconic, healthy and innovative brands in food category.

# Gifting range for this festive season:

In the gifting category, D C Johar & Sons has a range of brands and products: Dilmah Teas; Walkers Shortbread Biscuits and Cookies; Sprig Premium Gourmet Products; Pintola; Monsoon Harvest; Flat Tummies; and some more.

What make the products ideal for gifting: All the brands from the stable of D C Johar & Sons are iconic, the best in their category, and offer multifaced options for gifting; Also, the gift pack sizes are especially tailored to suit to all gifting needs and occasions. The company's product line has a number of pack sizes available and suits all gifting



The company is launching 6 new SKUs in Walkers Shortbread Biscuits and Cookies. Once these SKUs go into the gift baskets and to consumers' homes, it will prompt trials of these products to happen which, in turn, will lead to repeat purchases.

Y.V. Vijay Kumar
 General Manager,
 D C Johar & Sons Pvt. Ltd.

needs and occasions. For instance, Walkers Shortbread – an ideal gift to take home – comes packed in a new tin, which is ideal for keeping sentimental odds and ends after you enjoy the delicious shortbread. The tin contains four of Walkers most popular individually wrapped packs of fingers, rounds, highland and chocolate chip shortbread. The shortbread uses only the finest ingredients and is free from artificial flavorings and colorings.

What's new this festive season: The company is launching 6 new SKUs in Walkers Shortbread Biscuits and Cookies. Once these SKUs go into the gift baskets and to consumers' homes, it will prompt trials of these products to happen which, in turn, will lead to repeat purchases.

Value-addition in gifting products over traditional products: The company is customizing a few gift baskets and festive packs for its products.

**Price of the gifting range:** The price of the product range starts from Rs. 199 and goes up to Rs. 1200.

Retail reach of the gifting range: The company will be targeting the corporates and consumer groups looking to buy gourmet products.

Plans for communicating the gifting options to the consumer base: The company will take on some activations for GT, MT, and online channel to build up sales and connect better with its customers. Besides, it will also run trade schemes and special consumer offers to boost sales.

Expectations from the gifting season this year: The company expects that it will see a 25% jump in sales for its products during the festive months. It hopes to clock 60% of its sales through traditional retail and General Trade outlets; another 35% sales to come from Modern Trade; and about 15% sales from online platforms.





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# Happilo's gifting mantra: natural healthy nuts, dry fruits and berries in customized gift packs

Company and brand profile:
Happilo is an ISO & HACCP
certified gourmet healthy snack brand
from Bangalore, which has been serving
its customers with a premium range of
gourmet healthy snacking options since
2016. It gives its customers the largest and
best collection of nuts and healthy seeds
and processes a premium range of dried
fruits in its state-of-the-art facilities,
which have the capacity of producing
40,000 units per day.

# Gifting range for this festive season:

Happilo has over 50 varieties of delicious, crunchy healthy dry fruits, trial mixes, flavored non-fried nuts, exotic berries and organic roasted seeds to choose from.

What make the products ideal for gifting: Health and happiness is Happilo's mantra. Its natural healthy nuts and delicious dry fruits and berries have long been a staple of thanksgiving for gatherings. The products have all the flavors of berries, fusions, nuts and dry fruits that give the festive season a wholesome feel of celebration. Also, Happilo gift packs come in attractive packaging and stand out for the quality and the value proposition. The gift packs are customized as per the customer's requirement with regard to the quantity as well as the contents of the box.

What's new this festive season: This time around, Happilo plans to offer gift with a different packaging. It will come out with different assortment of premium flavored nuts like cashew



Happilo's premium range of gift packs containing an assortment of almond BBQ, cashew peri-peri, trail mixes and perfectly blended mixes are focused for festive seasons. Also, we have gift packs at affordable lower price points, which make them products of mass appeal.

- **Vikas D Nahar** Founder, Happilo International Pvt. Ltd.

per-peri, almond smokehouse, cranberry lovers mix, almond BBQ and different flavors of dry fruit mixes in boxes, potlis and tins with different price point to engage the shoppers.

The brand is currently in the process of re-innovating its dried fruit packs in a sleek box design. Each of its gift pack will contain all sleek boxes with Happilo products inside those boxes. It is also coming out with many more innovations in its packaging designs for the festive season. Along with the competitive rates of its gift packs, the brand aims to capture

a larger audience for its products.

# Gifting option for corporates:

Happilo, as a brand, has corporate gifting ideas for all festive seasons. Happilo is launching a new range of healthy snacking option with all new favorite flavored nuts clubbed with blended mixes of dry fruits to give a new edition of festive gifting for our corporate friends. Some 50 varieties of delicious, crunchy, healthy dry fruits, flavored nuts, berries and organic seeds can be customized as per the requirements along with box designs to suit their needs. The gifting option for corporate clients will also offer customized co-branding opportunities.

#### Categories of gifting options on offer:

A premium assortment of almond BBQ, cashew peri-peri, trail mixes and perfectly blended mixes are focused with the price point starting from 25 rupees and going upto 999 rupees. These premium ranges are known for festive seasons. Many of Happilo gift packs come at affordable lower price points, which make them products of mass appeal.

Gifting range contribution to overall sales during the festive season: About 15% of Happilo sales will come from its gifting range during the festive season.

Timeline and retail reach of the gifting range: The prime time for the gifting lasts for 60 days, usually peaking in the last 15 days in the run up to Diwali. But most of corporate ordering is planned in 45 days in advance of Diwali. The gifting season is an apt period to choose Happilo products, which have a shelf life of 6-12 months.

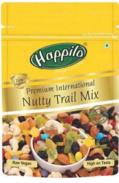
With its wide sales & distribution channel, Happilo will cater to all the leading urban cities apart from many Tier II & III regions as well. As it has products at lower ASP too, the brand will be able reach the masses and be available to all consumer segments.

# options to the consumer base: Happilo has launched campaigns in the print and social media besides also carrying out marketing campaigns on Instagram and Facebook These measures will help

Plans for communicating the gifting

and Facebook. These measures will help the brand to drive awareness about its products in both online & offline sales channels and to increase its brand engagement and product revenues.











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# Lovely Bake's International range of baked goodies make for an innovative gifting range

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

#### Gifting range for this festive season:

Lovely Bake has many new exciting and tempting gifts hampers and packages for this festive season. Its newly designed assorted cookies International tin boxes range has been already appreciated by one and all. Its exclusive Utsav and Celebrations packs in attractive festive gift designs make a perfect gift for every occasion. The brand also has a tempting range from Punjab's favorite Lovely Sweets consisting of mouth watering traditional Indian sweets and International delicacies, and tempting dry cakes.

What's new this festive season: The

brand is introducing new additions to its assorted cookies gift packs and hampers in keeping with new trends, tastes, budget and the occasion in hand. It has also introduced many new flavors in traditional Indian mithai and International sweets category. The innovative MAP packaging, which increases shelf life without any

preservatives or chemicals, has enabled the brand to introduce many new products like dry cakes, Indian sweets not only in North India but across its pan-India retail network. The brand will soon be



launching organic cookies and a mouth watering range of winter special sweets.

Gifting option for corporates: Lovely Bake's exclusive corporate gifting range comprises innovative variety of baked sweets and mithai and tempting traditional sweets range. It also has a specially curated range of premium dry fruits thals and gift baskets. There is special emphasis on premium packaging and the customizable company branding option makes it a perfect gift for employees, higher management, business associates and their families.

Gifting range contribution to overall sales during the festive season: Lovely Bakes' gifting range makes up for almost 35% of its overall sales during the festive period. Annually, the festive range contributes 15% of its overall sales.

Timeline and retail reach of the gifting range: The brand serves its customers with specialized gift packs and hampers suiting the festive needs depending on



This festive season, we have innovated with the packaging material by introducing an added premium-ness, the designs have a strong festive theme, and the overall presentation is the biggest ace in the brand's marketing plan.

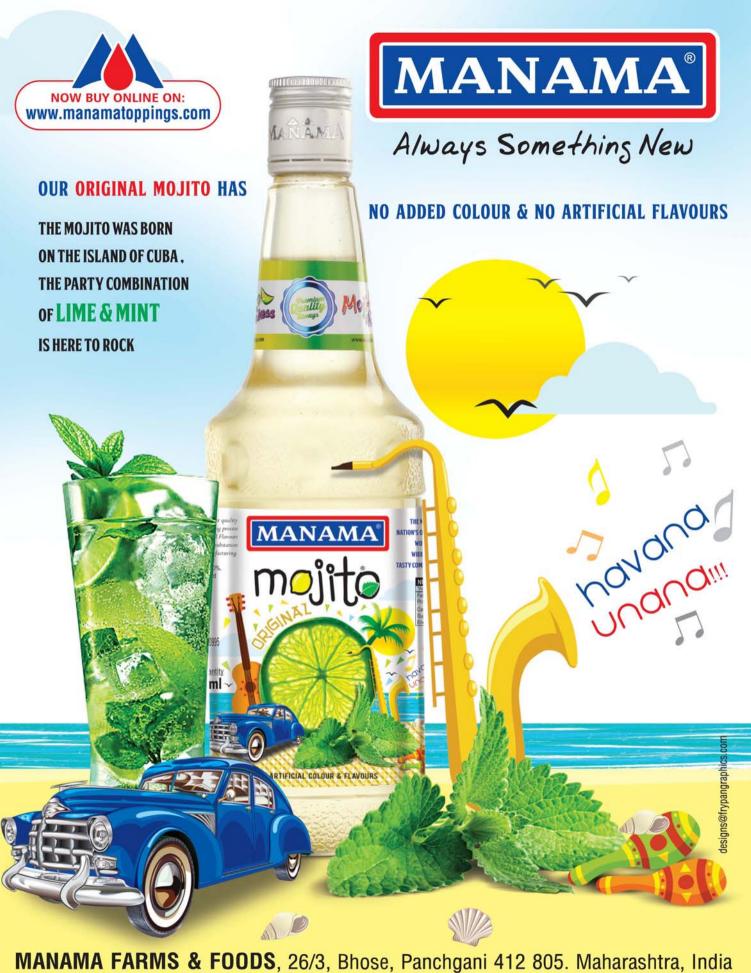
Shaishav MittalCEO, Lovely Bake Studio

the time of the year. Starting with special sweet/ mithai/ gujiya gift packs for Holi to chocolate hampers during Valentines Day, Lovely Bake's range of special traditional sweets, assorted cookies, dry cakes, International sweets like Turkish baklavas and dry fruit delicacies make perfect gifts for gifting occasions like Rakhi, Father's Day, Mother's Day, apart from corporate events and big festivals like Durga Puja and Diwali. The brand also has a melt-in-mouth range of plum cakes and Christmas special cakes to mark the end of the year and ring in the New Year and festivities.

Apart from the bigger cities, the brand is also targeting rural markets via its distributors. For smaller towns and cities, it has tie-ups with all leading Modern Trade stores, which will help its reach all corners of the country and offer a great opportunity to serve new customers.

Plans for communicating the gifting options to the consumer base: Across all its marketing platforms, Lovely Bake is engaging with customers and showcasing its range of products and their overall packaging and presentation. During the festive period, it will also support its retailers by appointing a promoter for Modern Retail Stores to introduce its special festive range to customers and encourage sampling of its products. It will also embark on a varied mix of marketing activities to reach customers, retail associates, and distributors. Besides, it will use social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Linkedin to connect and engage with them. Also, from time to time, it will communicate via press and magazine ads for a bigger scheme/ offer or for a new product launch.

Expectations from the gifting season this year: The brand believes that even though there is an economic slowdown in the country, its products will continue to do well across the regions and that its new additions for the festive season will be welcomed by both the industry and the customers.



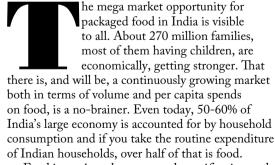
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# Why don't big businesses 'get' it?

Consumer India is excited, ready and waiting for relevant, value-right supply of all manners of food and food service. They are hugely under served by big businesses even as street food and small eateries evolve and innovate. Instead of waiting for Consumer India to develop a taste for foreign food and celebrating small steps here, can we add value to customer preferences today?

By Rama Bijapurkar



Food is not just about stomach gratification and nourishment. It is also about social expression, entertainment, and the adventure of new experiences, all of which Consumer India craves for. Lifestyles have more people staying out of the house for longer hours and having to make arrangements to eat without bankrupting themselves. Add to this,

the anxiety of a self-employed population (which is what most of India is) to stay healthy so you can go out and earn your daily bread. There is also the focus on "brain food" for children to compete better and the old Indian belief that connects food to health. Put it all together and we have a perform storm of opportunity that is already here with a ready and waiting Consumer India which is not being served to anywhere near its potential or desire.

The processed food and food service market is way below its potential if we assess the situation in terms of consumer/customer needs and spends. The demand structure of India is not going to change in a long time and neither will its challenging business



economics. It is a large market made up of a lot of people consuming a little bit each, which adds up to a lot, and is a high volume-low margin business that guzzles money before spewing it back. Food in India has an unimaginable variety, and is complex. Chapatis and puris will not be traded in for tortillas and pizzas merely because globalization is here and money and people can move more freely around the world. That said, there is also a great spirit of experimentation and adaptation. Adopting new foods is not new to Indians. The idli and dosa have travelled northward and the chapatti and chole southward. The Indian food market opportunity offers potential for great gains but great pain has to be borne first. The consumer is ready and waiting, and small food suppliers are multiplying to serve them; but where are the big suppliers, capable of R&D-led innovation on the one hand and driving down prices through economies of scale on the other? Let's start with ready to eat or even ready to cook chapatis. No one has been able to get the quality mix right and the chapatti maker machine that looks so easy and tempting in the TV commercials rarely produces the same results at home. If there was some more research done to make



it more user friendly and reliable, sales will explode. Making chapatis is negative labour that most cooks want to get rid of. But poor quality chapatis are not the answer either.

As time progresses, we all know that Indian households will eat more and eat better, as incomes grow and the willingness to pay higher prices for higher quality is inevitable. But what most companies don't realize is that Indian consumers are already paying more, driven by high levels of food inflation for average quality fresh food. Given the periodic spurt in food prices, if you are poor, your child may not see vegetables or tomatoes or sometimes even onions on a halfway regular basis.



And if you are rich, you will pay a horrendous price only to be deprived of quality. Fresh vegetables and even dals that you cook regularly have become bad value for money and no one has stepped into the gap with a lower price, higher performance point. Modest income consumers are ready and there is enough profit room for fresh and non-fresh forms of food to work. The popular assumption is that factory made food is for the rich because of the convenience offered or the exotic recipes. That may have been so two decades or even a decade ago, but nowadays factory made means cheaper and better. Furniture has proved that, apparel has proved that and there is a huge opportunity for a lower price-higher quality point for food that serves the less well-heeled who are larger in number. There aren't enough good quality frozen vegetables even for the affluent who have freezers and shop at places that do too. Even at a good margin pricing, it will sell, becoming a win-win for both manufacturer and consumer. At the height of food inflation last year, when the consumer was too shocked to understand what adjustments to make, the opportunity to change consumer habit was ripe. But the supply side didn't step up; had it done so, it would have changed the

consumer quite significantly. Many companies who have the ability to innovate products are waiting for the market to evolve.

Let's take the simple example of curd (why call it yoghurt when most consumers call it curd?). Many market watchers were surprised at how quickly the plain curd market took off. Didn't Indians prefer home made and fresh? But talk to consumers and they will tell you all the million things they have to do to get the curd to set properly. Cover it with a tea-cosy in winter, rush it to the fridge at the precise moment in summer or it will be too milky or too sour, put a green chilli in it when setting, results not guaranteed at all, depends on the milk quality, etc. What a relief, they say, that all this is somebody else's headache! Why have large companies not managed to scale this to far higher levels that an Indian staple should be? Why is it still the preserve of the regional small scale or cooperative sector? The absence of cold chain is one reason that people give. But lots of business models in food, especially quick service restaurants, use distributed manufacturing and marketing and centralised buying of ingredients to take advantage of scale benefits. Come summer, when it is needed the most, the category invariably goes into short supply, and the consumption habit never gets entrenched. Another reason it doesn't scale as much is that, like tea, the way it is consumed and hence the taste it should have varies by geography. I have seen south Indians take certain brands of curd and dilute them with water so that it is of the right consistency to eat with rice. Curd, in a south Indian household, doesn't often work for consumption with aloo parathas. It needs more stiffening! In Bengal, it must go well with sugar. Companies say that curd is a low margin product but what is needed is value-added curd to make this business attractive. However, value addition doesn't have to come from

The demand structure of India is not going to change in a long time and neither will its challenging business economics.









**Big businesses** don't have a range of diabetic sweets and biscuits. But the mithaiwalas do, local bakeries do, and small local dessert and chocolate makers do. Big businesses feel that the market is too small. But relative to what, is the interesting question.

fruit flavoured yoghurt that is a hard sell. It can come from creating a variety of new flavours that are in tune with the Indian palate and the myriad ways in which curd is consumed. Perhaps, what is needed is some research to develop the perfect curd setter apparatus and some food-based ingredient additives that make curd set better.

As is typical when a supply analysis of a market opportunity is done based on metrics such as 'organized sector' sales turnover and growth or per capita consumption of branded or packaged food of different categories, the conclusion is misleading. What it shows is a relatively small but fast growing market that is yet to "emerge". It is often said that the limitations of organized retail availability are in part to blame for this and the prescription is to wait until the consumer and the environment are ready. But if the metrics were the total consumption of sandwiches or Chinese food plates on the street, the size and growth in number of sandwich stalls or Chinese food carts delivering noodles and increase in average price and variety offered, the story is exactly the opposite.

Organized big companies, particularly the MNCs, have a very basic offering for a consumer base that is being spoilt with a vibrant and innovative unorganized sector or the small food marketer. This sector has created a food market throbbing with energy and innovation that often goes unnoticed or is dismissed by market analysts.

Big businesses don't have a range of diabetic sweets and biscuits. But the mithaiwalas do, local bakeries do, and small local dessert and chocolate makers do. Big businesses feel that the market is too small. But relative to what, is the interesting

question. India, regrettably, has amongst the world's largest diabetic population. Local retailers, especially in big cities, have lots of exciting packaged food items made by small suppliers, and sold through small stand-alone shops. The number of SKUs is mind boggling and the variety shows huge innovation.

I was invited, a few years ago, to meet with the global management team of a large and successful global company, on their India visit. I entered the conference room to find a set of competitive food products displayed, mostly from other MNCs, which did not even provide a whisper of what local competition they were up against. I carried some products bought from the local food speciality retailer, ranging from pan sweets in handy little plastic boxes to mango jelly "aam papad' sweets encased in crinkly transparent wrappers, chaat flavoured khakhras, standee pouches with ready mix poha (just add water), various sauce consistency chutneys in bottles and so on. They were quite surprised with what



they saw, and at the prices, but wondered what it had to do with them. Their competition was of the future kind, and would happen when the market evolved and consumers grew out of their present consumption habits.

In the meanwhile, all forms of competition are exploding and evolving. Aggregators take orders and deliver from various restaurants and individual

restaurants do home delivery. Now there is fresh fish, cleaned thoroughly, ready

to use, packed neatly in thermocol containers with lots of ice that is delivered to my doorstep in Mumbai. And they also call me and check what I want, as good a CRM as my local kirana. The most interesting example of new competition was recently reported in the media of the birth of a new business model where train travellers can order their meals online before the start of their journey











## MUNCH ON HAPPINESS THIS FESTIVE SEASON

































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and have it delivered piping hot at stations on the way, through a network of food providers in these towns. At least three companies are offering this service. Maybe soon we will see an Uber type app for food as well, where homemaker cooks will, with one day's notice, give you what you want when you have guests for dinner and can't afford to order the restaurant fare.

Small competitors and small retailers have been continuously innovating, both in product and in packaging, and testing higher priced offerings. Chaatwallahs everywhere have a widened variety with improved presentation and at attractive prices,

Serving small and micro food service is a large opportunity and there are companies in this space who are willing and ready to embrace better ways of improving productivity, commanding higher prices and improving efficiency. But it's not clear which big companies are innovating for them and helping them reduce their hassles while keeping their ability to differentiate. Ready to use ingredients that improve efficiency and hence productivity, better cleaning solutions, more efficient and customized cooking equipment and properly engineered packaging that is neither over engineered nor under, all have a great perceived value.







In spite of the growing health consciousness, people are not jumping up and down wanting to eat oats for breakfast. But oats idli and multigrain dosa for breakfast is catching on.

which make their range quite exciting - and this goes beyond using mineral water. You can go and eat Raj kachoris or try Chinese Bhel. Haldiram's has the formula but has not scaled too much geographically. If all of India has enthusiastically embraced Punjabi wedding rituals like mehndi ceremonies and sangeets, couldn't the market for chaat outlets be at least as large?

Indigo airlines has shown that the young consumer is okay to have "just add water" biryani or upma or pre-cooked mini masala dosa rolls. Why can't we buy this kind of food in food-specialising kiranas?

Food marketers have tough competition from food services, especially the micro entrepreneurs who provide any kind of dabba that you may require at any time you may want it and at different price points. The variety available at the road side shacks has also increased. The Indian consumer loves to eat momos at Delhi's Khan market pavement and vada pav and chai have the longest queues even at swanky airports. An udipi restaurant in the heart of Mumbai's Dadar has no qualms putting Thai food (such as it understands it) on its menu and a bhojanalaya deep south does noodles too nowadays, in order to keep its novelty seeking customers.

In spite of the growing health consciousness, people are not jumping up and down wanting to eat oats for breakfast. But oats idli and multigrain dosa for breakfast is catching on.

More bread is eaten by lower income people than upper income people, double roti as it is called. Could that double roti be made differently to come closer to a chapatti and come with ready to eat packets of cheap vegetables to heat and eat? Kiranas, food hawkers and vegetable vendors are a ready distribution channel for low priced food brands whether ready to eat or ready to cook. They are happy to add to their repertoire, but where is the supply?

We need to re engineer our minds and see the opportunity for what it is. We are fast becoming a nation of foodies, though I suspect we always have been that way – otherwise how could so many complex cuisines and dishes survive and evolve and travel all over the country for so many centuries! Now we have so many cooking shows on TV and so much on the Internet and we have mastered the art of Indianising every other cuisine and fitting it into our repertoire. The small food entrepreneur, the street vendor and the consumer are all ready. But where is big business in all this? The food market is not waiting to emerge. It already has. Consumers don't need more time to be ready for habit changes. They have been ready for some time now. PG





independent market strategy consultant. Sh is the author of "Customer in the Boardroom Crafting Customer Based Business Strateg also the name of the course she co-teacl



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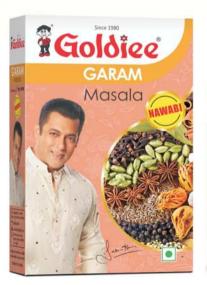
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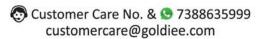
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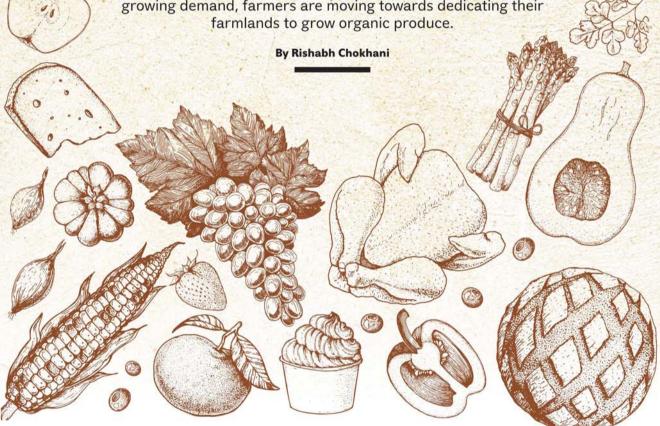






# Going organic: The need of the hour

Today, people prefer organic produce over conventionally grown food. The health benefits of food grown with natural farming techniques has proven to be easy on healthcare bills in the long run. Therefore, this paradigm shift in preference has only grown with time. To supply to the growing demand, farmers are moving towards dedicating their





rganic farming is a farming technique that refrains from using artificial external inputs such as chemo-synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. It creates an eco-system which can achieve sustainable productivity. This farming technique is based on holistic, ecologically balanced agricultural principles involving soil fertility, crop rotation and natural pest control.

The current farming methods rely on artificial fertilizers and chemicals that are harsh on environment and on the health of the consumer. With depleting resources and hazardous situation of environment, it is the need of the hour to shift to organic farming style.

The potential of organic farming in generating socially and environmentally beneficial effects are impressive and long lasting. Organic produce is not only good for health but also makes the soil rich. According to research conducted by the Office of Evaluation and Studies (OE), at the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), farmers in Latin America, China, and India can benefit dramatically from organic farming and will help in alleviating poverty in these countries. However, it is essential to assess its performance in terms of its economics which ultimately influences the adoption for farmers who have been using conventional form of farming techniques all their life.

#### The Long Term Approach

Due to overreliance on herbicides and pesticides, weeds and insects have grown resistant to the chemicals intended to contain them. This outcome, in turn, is reducing the production of wheat, corn, soybeans, and other plants that are critical to feeding a growing global population. A loss of biodiversity and the destruction of insect and animal habitats by commercial and residential construction are also lowering agricultural production.

However, organic farming yields is a long term approach. A recent study, based on comprehensive data, from a representative sample of approximately 80 organic and 80 conventional farms in northern India compared yield and profitability of the main rotation crops, over a period of five years. Contrary to the widespread belief that yields in organic farming are inevitably lower, the study shows that organic farmers achieved the same yields in cereals and pulses as conventional farmers, with considerably lower external inputs. Due to 45% lower production costs and higher sales prices, a crop like organic basmati cultivation was 105% more profitable than cultivating ordinary rice under conventional management. Therefore, it can be said that sustainable farming is getting a new lease of life.

#### Changing Mindset toward Health

Today, people prefer organic produce over conventionally grown food. The health benefits of food grown with natural farming techniques has proven to be easy on healthcare bills in the long run. Therefore, this paradigm shift in preference has only grown with time. To supply to the growing demand, farmers are moving towards dedicating their farmlands to grow organic produce. Recently, agricultural companies have started to play a more active role in this transformation, but by and large, the other crucial stakeholders—regulators, consumers, food companies, and farmers—are leading the way with a sense of urgency and creativity.

Most agricultural compaines are working towards making concerted attempts to integrate sustainability into new products and services. This, along with ever-so-growing demand for organic food, is an opportunity for farmers to capitalise on.

#### Low Investment

As organic farming is done without the use of chemical fertilizers, it uses natural fertilizers and pesticides produced locally and at a low cost. It is a known fact that farming depends on external factors such as climate, rain, pest attack, etc. Organic farmers suffer less in crop failure during adversities as their investment is considerably low. It should be noted that while shifting from chemical farming to organic farming, the transition might be costly.

#### **Traditional Knowledge**

In organic farming, the right amalgamation of soil leads to healthy crops, protects them from diseases and increases the fertility and longevity of the soil. Common techniques used by organic farmers to manage soil quality, which involves not just the soil itself but also water, weeds, disease and pests, include the use of animal manure, compost, cover crops, green manures and crop rotation.



Indian farmers are already rich in farming knowledge which does not use chemical fertilizers. When it comes to organic farming, farmers can make use of this traditional knowledge. Furthermore, in cases of organic farming, farmers are not dependent on those who provide chemical know-how.

Many in the industry are not convinced that organic foods are more nutritious or that organic methods trump scientific advances, citing for example that farming with Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) to help lessen world hunger outweighs any potential environmental risk. However, to conclude, the various benefits of organic farming for farmers all over the world include a high awareness level about organic products, low capital investment, the ability to achieve higher premiums in the market, and the ability to use traditional knowledge. PG

In organic farming, the right amalgamation of soil leads to healthy crops, protects them from diseases and increases the fertility and longevity of the soil.



The author is founder of Naturevibe Botanicals, manufacturer and supplier of organic products. It is a one-stop-shop for organically produced superfoods and herbs.





New Brown Bag

As consumers shift to more fresh-focused, snack-style lunches, retailers are rethinking their marketing and merchandising strategies.

#### By Jenny McTaggart

#### **Key Takeaways**

- Consumers are gravitating toward more fresh-focused. snack-style lunches. in which they can incorporate numerous bite-sized items, including essential meal components.
- Food retailers have begun innovating to help shoppers develop creative lunch ideas from items available across the store.
- Cross-merchandising and presentation are key to spurring sales, along with promoting on-trend plant-based and free-from items, and ethnic flavors.

n Japan, bento is a lacquered or decorated lunchbox, traditionally containing such items as rice, vegetables and sashimi (raw fish with condiments). But the term has taken on a new meaning among U.S. consumers, particularly for busy moms who are looking for more creative and healthy ways to package their children's lunches. All you have to do is type #bentobox on Instagram to see the many ways that people are getting creative with their midday meals.

At the center of this trend is a move toward more fresh-focused, snack-style lunches — in which consumers can incorporate numerous bitesized tastes, while hopefully including essential meal components such as protein, whole grains, fruits and vegetables. Examples include cut vegetables with dips, fruit cut in star shapes, cubed cheese, whole wheat crackers and turkey roll-ups.

With this growing trend, grocers have an important role to play — as well as an opportunity to grow sales in several fresh categories — by merchandising these bento-type meal ideas in the front of their stores, in the deli and in other sections. They can also educate and inspire their shoppers with lunch meal ideas and preparation tips to help save time.

Several retailers around the country are already innovating to help their shoppers think "out of the brown bag," so to speak.

"Retailers are embracing new ways of merchandising lunchtime solutions by breaking down category boundaries to create one-stopshopping destinations inspired by the modern-day shop," observes Nicole Peranick, senior director of retail transformation at Daymon, based in Stamford, Conn. "Traditionally, center store was the star of lunchboxes — think chips, drink boxes and shelf-stable snack packs, to name a few. However, as more and more consumers shift focus to the perimeter of the store, retailers are evolving their approaches and embracing new tactics such as cross-merchandising fresh and center store items, creating healthy snacking destinations

at the front end of the store, and curating assortments around new, trend-forward lunchtime solutions that educate shoppers while encouraging experimentation."

Peranick adds that retailers have an opportunity to build their private-brand strategies in regard to lunch-related categories, and she cites two "emerging lunchtime disruptors" — The LunchMaster, in San Francisco, and Red Apple Lunch, in Boston — as examples of school lunch providers that should inspire retailers. By offering curated lunchbox solutions, these providers beg the question of whether bento boxes could eventually become a new iteration of meal kits.

#### Weis Does Lunch Ideas

Sunbury, Pa.-based regional grocery chain Weis Markets is providing lunchbox ideas to shoppers through educational resources provided by its staff of dietitians, comprising five in-store dietitians and two corporate dietitians. The retailer has discussed snacking and lunch meal preparation in its Healthy Bites magazine, and also provides tips via in-store radio messaging, Facebook Live videos and social media. Additionally, in August, Weis offers kids' cooking classes with a back-to-school theme, including ideas for packing lunches. Some of its stores also feature a storewide back-to-school fest in the fall, which includes sampling different items throughout the store.

Beth Stark, lifestyles initiatives manager at Weis, notes that snack-type lunches appeal to children and adults alike for different reasons. "We know that a lot of adults aren't taking a true lunch break, so that can hamper their afternoon productivity and zap their energy level, and it may lead them to overeat later on in the day," Stark says. "So it's really about emphasizing the importance of taking some time, even if it's just 15 to 20 minutes, to step away from their desks and their screens and refresh, and eat a nutritious lunch."

Meanwhile, although most children do have a dedicated lunch break, their parents are looking for



Orlando, Fla.-based Produce for Kids (PFK) is gearing up for its sixth annual Power Your Lunchbox promotion, which will launch on Aug. 5. The digital campaign is aimed at helping families pack and eat healthier lunches throughout the school year. Its website, www.poweryourlunchbox.com, features family-tested lunchbox ideas that include fresh produce as both main ingredients and sides. The campaign also includes messaging across social media and e-newsletters



Amber Gray, digital marketing manager for PFK, says that produce is definitely gaining more attention at lunchtime. "We're seeing a lot of parents step away from the simple sandwich-chips-and-apple combination, and get more creative," Gray asserts. "Our goal is to give them easy solutions for healthy lunches. It doesn't have to be difficult to add more produce to the lunchbox and get kids to eat it. Fun ideas include cutting fruits and veggies into shapes using small cookie cutters, adding them to dishes they already like, or giving the lunchbox a theme."

quick, nutritious ingredients that don't take a lot of time to put together, observes Stark. "Parents can even work with the child to come up with some different solutions following a general formula: a fruit, vegetable, some type of whole grain and protein, and then maybe a dip or small treat," she suggests. "They can come up with a list of items that fit into each category, and then rotate those."

Stark notes that lunchbox innovation is found throughout the supermarket these days, whether in deli, produce, dairy or center store. "From the deli, hummus and guacamole work great as dips, while rotisserie chicken can be another meal component," she says. "In dairy, yogurts are another great lunch option."

She also sees plant-based products gaining ground, citing such examples as nondairy yogurt, chickpea snacks, edamame and sunflower seed butter. "This is another way people can add more

Most children do have a dedicated lunch break, and their parents are looking for quick, nutritious ingredients that don't take a lot of time to put together.





**Retailers** need to explore new crossmerchandising ideas, such as using bread from the fresh bakery for prepared sandwiches sold in the deli.

veggies and cut back on animal proteins if they want," Stark explains. "I think a lot of people are still dabbling in this category, so we're trying to offer education and encourage them to start by trying some plant-based snacks."

Even in center store, stalwart categories such as granola bars and canned soup are seeing innovation that could help boost sales in the next several years, she continues. In one example, Camden, N.J.based Campbell Soup Co. recently revealed plans to upgrade its traditional canned soups with more fresh ingredients, while also introducing bone broth to-go products.

Lakeland, Fla.-based Publix Super Markets is another retailer that has recognized the importance of offering quick lunch solutions for its shoppers. The retailer merchandises salads, cut fruit, veggieand-dip snack packs, and prepared sandwiches, traditionally in the deli but also in other areas of the store. "We continue to work on grab-andgo offerings that provide convenience for our customers," says Maria Brous, director of media and



community relations. "The perimeter of the store is as important as, if not more than, center store in terms of fresh, convenient, appealing offerings."

#### What's in Store

The importance of fresh categories at lunchtime was on full display during this year's International Dairy-Deli-Bakery Association (IDDBA) Show, held June 2-4 in Orlando, Fla. Among the merchandising displays included in IDDBA's What's in Store Live section, there were graband-go cases dedicated to both kids and adults. "Today, you have shoppers looking for immediate consumption, but you also have those looking to prepare lunch the next day," notes Eric Richard, education coordinator for Madison, Wis.-based IDDBA. "It's not only about convenience, but there's also the freshness factor. This creates the perfect opportunity for delis to connect with their shoppers."

Richard encourages retailers to look at interdepartmental relationships in the store and explore new cross-merchandising ideas, such as using bread from the fresh bakery for prepared sandwiches sold in the deli.

Presentation is also key, he adds. "You can use signage to call attention to 'school lunch' or 'work lunch,' and display products that are good for the next day's lunch.'

Meanwhile, retailers should highlight plantbased and free-from offerings as they continue to gain in popularity, and also consider promoting ethnic flavors. "Younger consumers are more open to experimentation," Richard advises, "so you want to give them new flavors in your salads and sandwiches." PG



#### PRODUCTS FIT FOR A LUNCHBOX

What's for lunch? Suppliers are on the case when it comes to product innovation. Here's just a sampling of new items and campaigns:

- Lorissa's Kitchen is launching Lunchbox Packs that come in two variations: Tender Bites and 100 Percent Grass-Fed Beef Sticks. Each line includes multiple globally inspired flavors. The packs don't require refrigeration and come in 5-count individually wrapped pouches and sticks. The products will be available nationwide in August.
- The California Prune Board is rebranding California Prunes with a new logo and tagline, "Prunes. For life." to highlight the dried fruits' premium nature and health benefits. Lunchbox recipes promoted by the board include Turkey and California Prune Roll Ups, as shown on page 71, as well as California Prunes on a Log.
- Nature Valley has introduced Crispy Creamy Wafer Bars, a new spin on the brand's popular namesake bars offering crisp layers of crunchy wafer alongside creamy peanut butter.
- TreeTop offers apple sauce pouches that are clear so that consumers can see exactly what's in them. Made with 100 percent fruit, the line's flavors are Apple, Cinnamon, Strawberry, Mango, Tropical, Mixed Berry and Organic Apple.
- Coleman Natural Foods has a new line of charcuterie snack packs that are ideal for the adult lunchbox. Varieties are Genoa Salame, Provolone and Taralli Bread; Pepperoni, Provolone and Dark Chocolate Almonds; and Hot Sopressata, Provolone and Olives. The products



feature American-raised pork and all-natural ingredients that are free from nitrates, nitrites, antibiotics and added hormones.

► Jack Link's recently debuted Zero Sugar Beef Jerky, marking the company's first zero-sugar offering on the market. The jerky is made with 100 percent beef, no added MSG and no preservatives.







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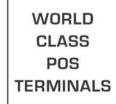
















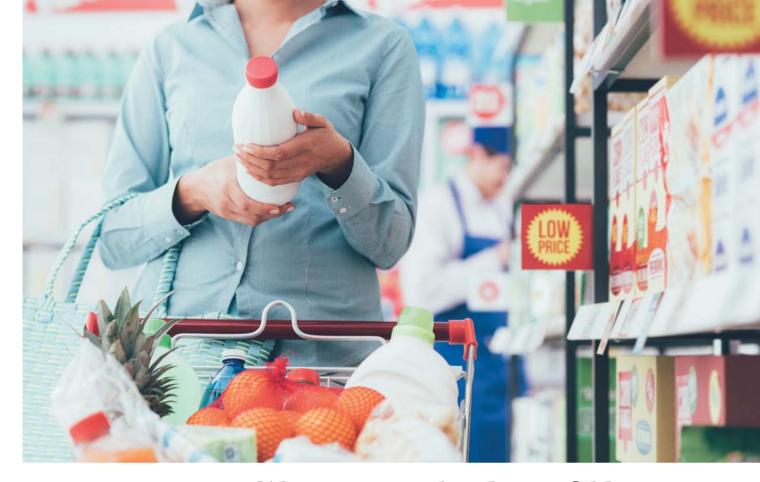




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## Clean Labels will **Become a Future Norm** for Food Brands

Still, the lack of a common definition for "Clean Label" imposes a challenge for the manufacturers because consumer interpretation and expectation of a clean label varies with their requirements.

By Dr. Varuna Rao

or modern consumers – who are proactive and take greater responsibility for their well-being and health needs - packaged food has become an indispensable category in the food retail space. Consumers, especially from urban affluent population and mostly from nuclear families, are increasingly getting interested in a diverse variety of foods that claim health benefits, and are safe and nutritious. This need has created a dependency on packaged foods and, in turn, has made food label an integral part of an informed buying decision.

However, the perception about food label is changing and becoming dynamic. The term continues to evolve with the changes in consumer demand and according to the ways that food

producers want to inform the consumers about the qualities of their products at the point of purchase. Food labels are being innovatively used by manufacturers to provide consumers with information, including the health and safety aspects about their foods.

Buyers today are well-travelled and keep abreast with the market trends. They are looking for cleaner labels that make it easy for them to understand the claims. For consumers, a clean label on food pack has now become an expectation in the packaged food category. The term "Clean Label" has itself evolved and picked its own momentum along the way. Still, the lack of a common definition for "Clean Label" imposes a challenge for the manufacturers because consumer interpretation and expectation of a clean label varies with their requirements.



#### Clean Label - What it Means

The term clean label is as ambiguous to the industry as it is for the consumers. Different consumer groups have different perceptions and requirements of a clean label. Does it mean that a clean label product is nutritionally balanced and healthy? Or does it mean that a clean label product is sourced ethically, is gluten free, vegan, and minimally processed? Or does a clean label product simply mean that it is transparent?

While there is no set definition, the trend is indicative of a common theme, i.e., "one that carries familiar sounding names on the ingredient list, has minimal ingredients, is natural, GMO free, transparent, with minimal processing and has less complicated and chemical sounding ingredients. Claims like natural, organic, preservative free, etc, can also be a part of a clean label."

#### Clean Label – Friend or for the Manufacturers?

Manufacturers are trying their best to make their product feel or look "Clean" on the label by using magic words like "organic", "handmade", "free from claims" and "low/ high in claims". But is this practice restricted only to the front of pack (FOP) claims by playing on the consumer's emotions and understanding or is the practice also getting translated into action? And therein lies a challenge because adopting a clean label in practice for a commonly used packaged product not only makes it expensive and premium but also affects the palatability of the product. This is why a clean label product is desirable only to a premium niche customer segment with an evolved sense of taste and one that chooses health over any other criteria.

Although with the advancement of food technology and innovations, packaged foods with clean labels are becoming palatable, they still remain a premium and niche segment. The question is: how can they be made available to the masses? Since claims play a vital role in influencing a buying decision, it will be a trend to watch out for in the future. Will more numbers of manufacturers overhaul their product profile or will clean label claims be restricted to the niche gourmet premium product line up? If the trends are to be believed, clean label will no more be an exception and will rather become a basic expectation and hygiene factor in the near future.

#### The Future of Clean Label

According to a survey done by market research agency Statista in 2018, the global health and wellness food market was valued at 707.12 billion U.S. dollars in 2016 and was projected to increase up to 811.82 billion U.S. dollars by 2021. The increase in the adoption of healthy eating habits is a key factor driving the growth, and this awareness will propel the market further.



Yes, there will be regulations that will clearly define the scope of a clean food label and that should satisfy the requirements to meet consumers and policymakers' expectations. The regulations will not only encompass ingredients and additives but will also extend to packaging, sustainability, purity, ethical treatment at sourcing and workplace and traceability of raw materials as the key components along with the brand value and philosophy.

Brands will need to prove the product's authenticity and will have to get to the execution and implementation of the claims declared and not just use it as a marketing tool. In order to attain this, brands need to revamp their philosophy today and invest in the technologies now. Instead of looking for short-term profits, brands should have the foresight to create values that invest in the future of clean eating. The approach should not be merely to replace controversial ingredients but rather invest in ethical raw material sourcing, R&D and manufacturing in order to claim expertise and be the market leader of the future.

Brands that follow this approach will not only secure their position as market leaders and innovators but also win the consumer's confidence. But companies will need a vision and should adopt a topdown approach for successful implementation of the philosophy that is favorable for the brand, consumer, policymakers and the environment as well.

Regardless of how you define it, the clean label trend is growing fast. It is definitely here to stay and will become a norm as consumers have a higher willingness to pay for a cleaner and transparent food label. PG



The writer is a Nutrition and Wellness consultant with a PhD in consumer insight and food labelling. She has over 13 years of professional experience in corporate wellness programs, new product development, menu planning,

target group based nutrition campaigns, activation planning, etc.



Clean label will no more be an exception and will rather become a basic expectation and hygiene factor in the near future.

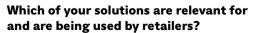
# "Our Retail Cash management solution improves productivity of store employees manifold"

*Progressive Grocer* spoke to **Varun Rathi, COO and Co-Founder, Happay,** whose Retail Petty Cash management solution is a perfect fit for multi-chain retailers by helping them go cashless and manage store-wide expenses digitally with ease.



### Tell us about your company and its products and services.

Happay, a Business Expense Management solution provider, helps organizations manage all types of business spends including employee reimbursements, travel & expense management, retail outlet cash management, employee flexi benefits, cash management of large fleets and vendor payments. It's an intelligent and intuitive platform consisting of Happay Prepaid Visa® Cards that can be managed and controlled via desktop and mobile. Employees use Happay prepaid cards for business expenses like travel, fuel, accommodation, utility payments, petty cash expenses etc. and report expenses on their mobile app. Happay helps organizations fund business expenses easily and quickly and have real-time visibility and control over company-wide expenditure.



There are many management concerns for retail outlets, for example:

- Distributing Petty Cash: A retail outlet may have a host of small, unexpected expenses in the course of its operation. Snacks for employees or customers, store repairs, stationery, etc, are some of the expenses outlets typically see. Retailers must maintain some cash to be used for these ad-hoc expenses but distributing these funds is difficult, especially for a large chain that is spread across the country.
- Separating Sales Cash from Petty Cash: Due to lack of cash in hand, sometimes store operators take cash from the counter to use for ad-hoc expenses. This practice is unfavourable as it often leads to errors in accounting.
- Reporting Operational Expenses: Retail
  employees also have a hard time reporting
  expenses incurred. Since most of the retail
  chains have manual processes for reporting
  petty cash expenses; approval, verification and
  reimbursement is a tedious process with a lot
  of back and forth between retail outlets and the
  head office.
- Preventing Cash Leakage: The lack of or delay in visibility of expenses brought forth by manual processes followed in the retail industry means most retail stores are very vulnerable to cash leakage.

Our Retail Petty Cash management solution is a perfect fit for multi-chain retailers. Every retail store is given a Happay prepaid card. Petty cash funds for the week or the month are added to the card by company admins. This way, store staff don't have to use sales cash for petty expenses. Store staff can use the card online, at POS and to withdraw money from ATMs. They can add their expenses and receipts to the Happay mobile app and submit expense reports on the go. Admins in turn can proactively track employee expenses online. Happay helps retailers go cashless and manage store-wide expenses digitally with ease.



#### Which are the pain areas in F&G retail that your app helps to redress?

Fund transfers: Retailers must maintain some cash to be used for ad-hoc expenses but distributing these funds to retail stores is difficult, especially for a large chain that is spread across the country. Physical distribution is a long and tedious process whereas the latter create tax issues for the store staff. Happay replaces cash with petty cash cards. Petty cash for the week or the month can be easily added to the card in seconds from the Happay dashboard. Whether a company has 10 stores or 100 store, cash transfer takes just a few seconds.



Sales Cash for petty expenses: Due to a lack of cash in hand, sometimes store operators take cash from the sales counter to use for ad-hoc expenses. This practice is unfavorable as separating sales cash and petty cash can be difficult and create hurdles during accounting. With Happay prepaid cards, petty cash is separated from sales cash hence, no accounting or reconciliation issues.

#### What are the gains and savings that retailers make by integrating your solutions?

- · Reduced cash leakage across stores
- Elimination of cost of fund transfer, cost of courier and stationary
- Working capital optimized by 68%
- 100% visibility and control over expenditure
- End to end digitization of processes

#### Who are your major retailer clients specifically in the food domain?

Chai Point, Chaayos, Chili's, Zomato, The Beer Cafe, Health & Glow, Foodworld, among others are some of the Food retailers using Happay Cash Management solution.

#### How can retailers buy your solutions?

Retailers can sign up for the solution online at Happay.in or get in touch with us at care@happay. in / 080-39510101

#### Can you cite a case scenario that shows how Happay solutions helped solve the problems faced by a retailer?

We can share a case study on how retailer Health & Glow improved store productivity by 50% using Happay solutions. The details are as follows: Problem: Personal care retailer Health & Glow operates more than 150 outlets across the country. To fund and manage operational expenses across these outlets, employees had to physically receive petty cash from their regional offices and submit expense vouchers back to the regional offices. This meant that store employees were being wasted on managing petty cash expenses.

Employees had to file each store expense incurred in petty cash vouchers. A designated customer service associate had to carry these vouchers to the regional office to seek reimbursement. The finance team manually verified each expense voucher with the receipts and entered the data manually into spreadsheets. After this was done, customer service associates brought the reimbursed fund physically to the branch. How Happay Helped: Health & Glow wanted to find a better way to distribute and manage petty cash expenses across their outlets. They adopted Happay Petty Cash Management Solution across 60 outlets. Now Health & Glow can instantly distribute funds on Happay Prepaid Cards to each outlet. Store employees can report expenses in a click and they don't have to travel to the regional office every time. Through this, Health & Glow managed to improve productivity of store employees by more than 50%.

#### Tell us your future plans and how you plan to scale up your operations.

Indian businesses, both SMEs and large enterprises, have shown strong adoption and prefer Happay for making all their business payments. Our payment platform is currently processing transactions worth INR 3000+ crore annually. We have seen an annual growth rate of 200%, fuelled by increasing customer growth and are well positioned to reach over 10,000 small, medium and large enterprises by this year's end.

Currently, over 4500 businesses in India manage their expenses through the Happay platform. In addition to small and medium sized businesses, we are now catering to the expense management troubles of bigger enterprises. We feel we can multiply our impact tenfold if we are able to help enterprises go digital - since the numbers of employees they employ and vendors that they do businesses with can also become part of a cashless system in this way. PG





**Our payment** platform is currently processing transactions worth INR 3000+ crore annually. We have seen an annual growth rate of 200%, fuelled by increasing customer growth and are well positioned to reach over 10,000 small, medium and large enterprises by this year's end.

— Varun Rathi COO and Co-Founder, Happay

# Food, Beverage & Non-food Products S INCE TO SERVE A SERVE A



#### ▲ Medusa: The new beer brand for millennials

Medusa, introduced in 2018, is a modern beer brand, imagined in India with an impeccable combination of contemporary packaging, strategic marketing positioning and quality. The product is aimed at the millennial consumers who are looking out for new taste and flavor in the Indian market. The beer has the seamless combination of best barley malt and imported hops from Germany. Since its launch, Medusa has been building a sturdy portfolio amongst urban youth with its spectacular taste. The product is available at the price range of Rs. 100 for 500 ml.

#### Oh Cha! launches a range of ayurvedic wellness teas

Boutique tea brand Oh Cha! has introduced a new and wide range of 25 ayurveda inspired health teabags and a 100% natural vanilla honey jar. Pamper yourself with a cup of aromatic and flavorful blend like Glow tea that contains some of the best sources of vitamins and minerals, which will keep your hair and skin healthy.



Or the Boost tea that will help in encouraging healthy digestion and keep a check on your weight. The other exotic variant is the Trim tea, which is a combination of Indian spices and Himalayan rock salt. Experience the flavors and aroma of the herbal Calm tea, which will help in reducing anxiety and boost lifestyle balance. And finally, to prepare you for a restful sleep, a cup of Dream tea is ideal.

With Oh Cha! customizable gift boxes, sending gifts to your near and dear ones can become more exciting and memorable this festive season. The boutique tea brand has come out with a wide and luxurious range of tea boxes for gifting to make festive celebration merrier. Oh Cha! gift boxes are obtainable on their official Oh Cha! webpage and on various platforms such as Propshop24, Amazon, Style Salad, Giftona and Scootsy. They are also available at the Twigs & Tales store in Kolkata.

#### ▼ Marico launches Moringa Green Tea & Green Coffee



Marico Limited has launched a range of super beverages as part of its Saffola Fittify Gourmet offering. The new addition includes superfood Moringa Green Tea and Green Coffee Instant Beverage Mix – with antioxidant benefits. Available in an array of delicious flavours, this range has been carefully crafted by nutritionists and curated by celebrity chef Kunal Kapur to combine the best of taste and health for a slimmer fitter life.

The 'Superfood Moringa Green Tea' brings together the antioxidants benefits of green tea with the superfood moringa thereby creating a nutrition powerhouse and giving consumers a healthier green tea. Adding more nutrition to one's food and flavor to one's life, this range of USDA organic superfood moringa green teas boosts immunity, aids weight management and helps regulate metabolism, giving an individual nothing short of a gourmet product.

Another Saffola Fittify Gourmet offering is the launch of the 'Green Coffee Instant Beverage Mix' that not only aids weight management but also regulate blood sugar and metabolism. Unlike regular coffee, Saffola Fittify Green Coffee is not roasted, thus allowing it to retain the natural nutrition prevalent in coffee beans. The product has 3X more antioxidant power than regular coffee, making it a naturally healthy alternative.

Consumers can purchase 'Superfood Moringa Green Tea' at INR 220 (37.5 gm) for 15 servings and Green Coffee Instant Beverage Mix at INR 260 (30 gm) for 15 servings. The products are available across the top metros in modern trade outlets such as Godrej Nature's Basket, Foodhall and Star Bazaar stores across Mumbai, Delhi NCR, Pune, Hyderabad and Bangalore and e-commerce portals such as Amazon, Flipkart and Big basket.



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#### Chandon launches its Brut variant for the festive season



Brand Chandon, which has its own Chandon India Limited Edition, will launch an exclusive new pack for its Brut variant as its special offering to Diwali and the end of year festive season. Swathed in the stunning combination of playful turquoise and sophisticated metallic gold, the design motifs of its Brut variant - which will be marketed as the Party StarterTM bottle for 2019 – are inspired by India's royal history, majestic grandeur and stunning palaces that scale the length and breadth of this magnificent country. Turquoise is emblematic of good luck, serenity, love, while gold symbolises illumination, courage, passion, and wisdom, a chosen pair to expertly embody the joyous, magnanimous spirit of Chandon India.

Chandon's limited edition festive end-ofyear bottle will retail for Rs.1,650 and will be available at select retail outlets and F&B partners across Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Gurgaon, Rajasthan, Chandigarh, Punjab and Kolkata, from October 2019.

#### Dr Oetker FunFoods adds another exciting product to its mayonnaise range

Dr Oetker FunFoods Professional, a leader in western sauces and spreads category in India, has launched a new product – Veg Mayonnaise Smoky Peri-Peri – aimed at strengthening its mayonnaise



range for the food service vertical. The variant is thick and creamy, infused with peri peri chilli and a smoky note, which adds a spicy zing to sandwiches, burgers, wraps, French fries and much more. The product will be exclusively supplied to hotels, restaurants, cafés, bakeries and caterers.

The range of Dr. Oetker FunFoods Professional consists of over 150 products that enable leading QSRs, restaurants, cafés, and local eateries across the country to delight their customers. The brand is focused on delivering food solutions with the highest level of quality. This recent innovation is another addition to the versatile product range of mayonnaise, sandwich spreads, pizza & pasta sauces, dressings, syrups, toppings and milkshake mixes.

#### ▶ Typhoo launches 'Organic' Green Tea

Typhoo, Britain's iconic tea brand since 1903, has converted its wide range of green teas into all pure organic variants. The brand offers four of its most popular variants of green tea into organic blends, tapping into the growing category of green tea.

Selected from the finest organic tea estates, Typhoo's Organic Green range contains antioxidants, catechins, polyphenolic compounds that are used to exert numerous protective effects. Typhoo, popularly known for using natural ingredients and blending them such that to give a wholesome experience to its consumers. The ingredients blended are known to have benefits like natural detox, weight management, immunity booster, enhancement of memory and focus.

Typhoo has upgraded four blends into its Organic Green Tea Range: Organic Pure Green Tea; Organic Green Tea Tulsi; Organic Green Tea Lemongrass; Organic Green Tea Moroccan Mint. These organic variants are available at: Typhooindia.com and other leading online platforms at an MRP of Rs. 210.



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#### ◀ Eighty20 launches plant-based protein snack bars

Eighty20 is a health food brand founded by Kajal Bhatia, a certified whole-food nutritionist. She found out from her experience that there was a need for clean and honest food brands. Mumbai-based eighty20 provides wholesome nutrient-rich solutions for daily meals; the brand envisions to being the go-to-health brand in India with a global presence. The health food startup makes 100% natural, vegan, glutenfree, and minimally processed healthy snacks, which are based on the philosophy

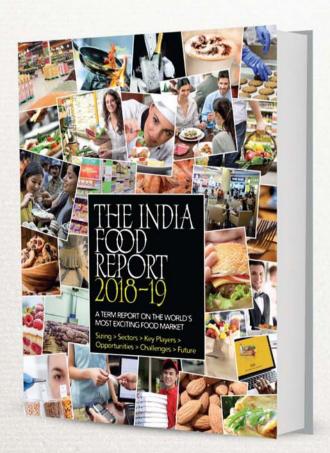
that eating right 80% of the time allows individuals to balance health without compromising on taste. The products are completely sugar free and made from natural ingredients. The price range starts at Rs. 55 and retails at all A+category stores in tier I cities. eighty20 currently retails its protein bars on Amazon and Big Basket. In modern retail space, it is available in Nature's Basket, Reliance Retail and Noble Plus chains.

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

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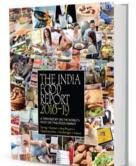
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