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# PROGRESSIVE GROCER

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**INDIA EDITION**

**Ready  
to Eat**

New unconventional products, attractive packaging and on-the-go meal options are taking the segment ahead

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**OUR STORES ENJOY  
STRONG CUSTOMER  
CONNECT AND  
FAIR PRICE IMAGE**

— SANJAY SHETE

CHAIRMAN — SAHAKARI BHANDAR





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The festival of Diwali – the most anticipated and eagerly looked forward to occasion by the retail industry, when Indians pull out all the stops to binge on shopping and buying gifts – is just round the corner. While big festivals come in a regular rotation and every day is a holiday on some level – from birthdays to promotions to farewell parties, to name just a few – putting the “special” on special occasions generally means elevating the foods and beverages experience for celebrating such milestones.

Retailing and business opportunities are significant on these big occasions. Retailers can attract shoppers by providing and promoting gourmet offerings, including both packaged products and store-made or private label choices. Consumers purchase specialty foods for a special occasion like a dinner party, birthday or holiday.

Many parts of the store can be a draw for occasion-minded, gourmet-seeking shoppers, meaning that basket lift can occur in several spots. In the perimeter, for instance, the in-store bakery, deli, prepared food area and produce section offer a variety of products for parties or gatherings of different scales and sizes. Meanwhile, in center store, specialty foods can be merchandised for everyday consumption or for days that mean something more to a shopper.

Carrying specialty foods and beverages is a signal to shoppers that a store provides items for both “regular” eating occasions and occasions that mean something more.



Amitabh Taneja  
 Editor-in-Chief

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### COVER STORY

Sanjay Shete  
Chairman – Sahakari Bhandar

#### FROM A STAIID CONSUMER CO-OPERATIVE TO A MODERN AND ECO-FREINDLY GROCERY CHAIN

Sahakari Bhandar is Mumbai's most visited and preferred grocery store for more than 50 years. With 24 branches strategically located from Colaba to Virar, it offers convenience, good quality, safety and consistent availability of products to its customers. The legacy of trust continues since 1966, servicing more than millions of happy families. Sahakari Bhandar, although a co-operative, is an exciting blend of modern retailing with deep understanding of daily needs of its customers.

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# Market Update

## Digitisation of kirana stores to ensure product penetration in rural and urban markets

Deloitte India has launched a report, 'EVOLVE for consumer', which lays emphasis on the convergence of general and modern trade as retailers continue to use the strength and scale of technology to tap both urban and rural India. According to the report, modernized kirana stores will play a key role in the overall consumption game. They hold an 88 percent share in the total retail pie compared with modern trade at 8-10 percent and e-commerce at 3-4 percent (expected to grow at a CAGR of 32 percent).

As convenience becomes a major consideration for consumers while making a purchase decision, companies (in addition to using technology for personalized messaging) are focusing on strengthening their last mile availability through tech-enabled kirana stores to make their products more accessible. To this end, a majority of the modern brick and

mortar retailers, e-commerce players, and brands have begun using technology through a widespread network of kirana stores to increase their retail presence and win over the Indian consumer. The report also highlights that with the rise of the connected consumer, brands now must focus on convenience, availability, sustainability, and omni-presence by investing in technology throughout the consumer lifecycle.

Commenting on the launch of the report, **Rajat Wahi, Partner, Deloitte India**, said, "While advanced technological solutions will be paramount in engaging people through their shopping journey, what is even more important is the last mile connectivity to ensure product penetration in rural and urban markets through digitization of kirana stores and their linkages with online channels. Our report mentions that retailers need to focus on using digital



strength to modernize kirana stores. This, in turn, can address delivery issues, especially in rural India. Bharat presents a great opportunity to retailers and brands because of its size and increased discretionary spending."

The report also talks about India's retail journey from brick vs. click to brick and click. With just three percent of kirana stores being tech-enabled and a majority of the rest willing to adopt technology, retailers and brands have significant opportunities to technologically and financially empower these stores.

## Tech implementation is key to compete in on-demand economy

The "Warehousing Asia Pacific Vision Study" from Zebra Technologies Corporation reveals that warehousing, distribution and fulfillment operations are undergoing a modern-day makeover as they transform to meet the growing needs of the world's on-demand economy. The study analyzes IT and operations decision makers from manufacturing, transportation and logistics, retail, post and parcel delivery and wholesale distribution industries for their current and planned strategies to modernize warehouses, distribution centers and fulfillment centers.

Warehouse leaders today are turning to technology to address business critical challenges resulting from this global phenomenon. They are adopting advanced technology and empowering their workers with a performance edge.

More than three-quarters (81 percent) of the respondents tracked by the study agreed that augmenting workers with technology is the best way to introduce automation in the warehouse, but only 34 percent have a clear

understanding of where to start automating. Currently, up to 88 percent of decision makers are either in the process of or are planning to expand the size of their warehouses by 2024.

"Consumers today have seemingly insatiable demands for 24/7 product search and purchase. The 'I want it now' mentality of consumers stretches across all industries and have since upended the supply chain, impacting manufacturers, retailers and the warehousing operations that serve their needs," said **Deep Agarwal, Regional Sales Director of India, Zebra Technologies**.





## Innovationqore to fund 10 start-ups upto Rs. 2 crore each every six months



Turbostart, a national programme that will identify and nurture top 10 innovative startups every six months, was launched by Bengaluru-based InnovationQore. Turbostart will facilitate the discovery of innovative early-stage startups, invest in them and help them with product and market validation, instant funding, industry connects and all customary business support. The programme is open to all Indian startups and is run in a competition format. Turbostart has entrepreneurs and business leaders onboard as investors along with a seasoned management team working full-time to assist the startups.

In order to be considered eligible for the Turbostart programme, a startup should have been incorporated for a period of less than 10 years with a minimum viable product or proof of concept. The startup should be working towards innovation and development or improvement of products or processes or services with a scalable business model.

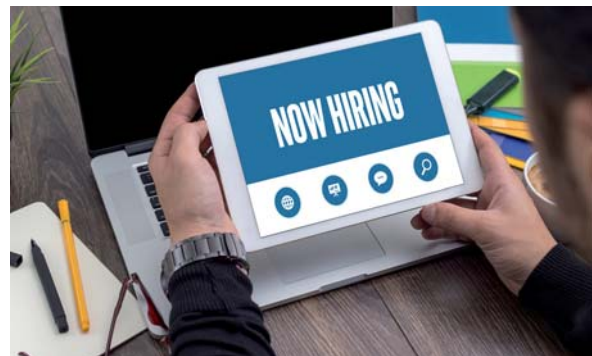
“Our vision is to build a strong startup ecosystem by creating a clear path of success for the entrepreneurs and eliminating the tedious task of dealing with market hurdles and non-core activities. Our plan is to fund

20 startups per year in two seasons – January and June. The intent is to accelerate the growth of at least 100 startups over a period of five years. We have raised around Rs. 50 crore already with additional commitments from investors on a need basis.” said **Ganesh Raju, Founder and CEO, InnovationQore.**

“In addition to funding, we will provide startups with assistance in product positioning, human resource management, brand and digital strategy along with marketing and sales. We will help in evaluation of business models to capture and enhance value. We will also provide assistance in determining appropriate legal/ operating structure in India and overseas, and manage strategic and tactical issues related to capital. For a period of 12 months, startups in the cohort will also receive support services such as legal and regulatory services, tax planning, accounting and financial reporting, compliance services and anything else that occupies considerable mind space of the founder. We will tie-up with other incubators, accelerators etc. As a first step, we have tied up with Atria University wherein they will provide working space for the startups.” informed Raju.

## Consumer durables, FMCG & retail sectors push talent demand for festive hiring

With the beginning of the festive season, consumer-driven sectors such as consumer durables/ FMCG (5%) and retail (12%) reported growth in talent demand in September 2019, says TimesJobs RecruiteX. Healthcare/ Pharmaceuticals industry recorded the highest growth in talent demand (21%) in September. TimesJobs RecruiteX is a monthly recruitment index that records the demand and supply of talent at India Inc. In a y-o-y analysis, both the industries posted double-digit growth in talent demand. In a Sep'18 Vs Sep'19 comparison, consumer durables/ FMCG and retail posted 28% and 29% growth, respectively. The report revealed that tier-II cities such as Lucknow and Chandigarh recorded the highest growth in talent demand in September 2019 edition. A similar trend was observed on September 2018.



According to the RecruiteX report, the overall hiring activity remained flat across high-volume industries such as IT/ Telecom, BFSI, Automobiles and BPO for September 2019. Commenting on the report, **Sanjay Goyal, Business Head, TimesJobs & TechGig** said, “Hiring activity has been flat to negative in major sectors such as IT/Telecom, BFSI, BPO/ITeS, Automobiles due to the economic slowdown. Retail and Consumer durables/FMCG has pushed the talent demand owing to festive hiring and registered double-digit growth in y-o-y analysis, too. We can hope to see a revival in hiring in high-volume sectors in the coming months.”

With high volume sectors like IT/ ITeS witnessing flat to negative hiring activity, service-intensive sectors like Healthcare, Retail, Consumer Durables/ FMCG and Travel & Hospitality continued to hire in September 2019. The top three sectors to witness m-o-m growth in talent demand were: Healthcare/ Biotechnology/ Pharmaceuticals – 21%; Retail – 12%; Travel & Hospitality – 7%.

Chandigarh, which was among top hiring cities in August 2019, found a spot on September 2019's tally too. Apart from Delhi-NCR, only Bengaluru saw some spurt in hiring, whereas all other metro cities were stagnant on hiring – Lucknow – 20%; Delhi – 12%; Chandigarh – 13%.

**Grover Zampa Vineyards bags gold at the Decanter Asia Wine Awards 2019**



Grover Zampa Vineyards, India's longstanding wine producer, was recently honoured with a gold medal and seven other accolades at the Decanter Asia Wine Awards (DAWA) 2019. As part of the eighth edition of DAWA, top wine experts, including Masters of Wine and Master Sommeliers from across Asia, gathered in Hong Kong to judge over 3,000 wines from 34 countries.

Recognized as Asia's most prestigious wine competition, DAWA aims to award quality wines via a trusted source of recommendations from the empanelled judges. This year, the new Vice Chair, Hiroshi Ishida, alongside returning Vice Chairs – Jeannie Cho Lee MW, Sarah Jane Evans MW, Li Demei, Andrew Jefford, Michael Hill-Smith MW and Poh Tiong Ch'ng were appointed to oversee the competition.

Of the various significant victories, Grover Zampa Vineyards was awarded a gold medal for Vijay Amritraj Reserve Collection (White). This is the second time when a wine from Grover Zampa has won a Gold at Decanter Asia. Previously, in 2014, the Art Collection Sauvignon Blanc had

won a gold, and was judged as best wine in the show by winning the international trophy. At this year's show, Grover Zampa was also awarded three silver medals for La Réserve Blanc, La Réserve Royale Brut (White) and Soirée Brut (White), respectively. The premium winemaker also bagged four bronze medals for Grover Zampa Soirée Rosé Brut, Art Collection Chenin Blanc, Art Collection Rosé and Art Collection Sauvignon Blanc.

Elated by the honours, **Vivek Chandramohan, CEO, Grover Zampa Vineyards**, said, "It gives us immense joy to see our wines win accolades at DAWA; especially the gold this year for the Vijay Amritraj Reserve Collection White 2018. These awards not only support us in expanding our reach internationally but also solidify our efforts in placing Indian wines on the global map. The wins also recognize the efforts of our meticulous winemakers and viticulture team, while also ensuring that Indian consumers are presented with adequate opportunities to taste the best of wines."

**Tupperware India eliminates single use plastic from its product packaging**



Tupperware, a well-recognized global brand based out of Orlando, US, has switched to 100% recyclable paper-based compostable packaging material in India. After six months of thorough research, evaluation of options and initial testing in India and select international markets, the brand decided to switch from single use plastic packaging to compostable packaging material, starting 1st October 2019 for all future manufacturing in India.

With this change, the brand's cost of manufacturing will go up by 7%. The increased cost will be absorbed internally by Tupperware India and not passed on to the consumer in any way. Tupperware is globally known for its sustainable business approach and the brand recently announced its global vision – "No time to waste" to significantly reduce single use plastic and food wastage. Since inception, Tupperware has played an organic role in helping consumers reduce single use plastic and food waste. Be it today's modern Eco Water Bottle, which replaces single-use plastic bottles, or Earl S. Tupper's signature seal that was uniquely designed in 1946 to lock in freshness, Tupperware brands continue to design products that are durable, high-quality, and made to keep food fresher,

longer and to be reused for years to come. Tupperware is one of the few global brands to offer a lifetime warranty to its consumers so they may buy all products with complete trust and confidence.

Speaking about the anti-SUP initiative, **Deepak Chhabra, Managing Director, Tupperware India**, said, "We are pleased to see that our consistent effort towards eliminating the use of SUP has found a strong voice in the government, with the Hon'ble PM giving out a clarion call on elimination of SUP from India. Today, there is huge awareness around the need to switch over from SUP to environmentally friendly alternatives. Our global vision 'No time to waste' is also aimed at significantly reducing plastic and food waste through product

innovation, packaging reduction, operational goals and strategic partnerships."

Sharing details regarding the elimination of single use plastic packaging and adoption of 100% recyclable paper-based compostable packaging material, he added, "Tupperware invests heavily into research and development and we settle for nothing but the best. Be it the selection of raw material, our design methodology, high precision moulds or the ultimate packaging, every nuance is given due importance. We believe that it is a corporate's responsibility to invest time, energy, effort and resources in building a better and sustainable tomorrow. We are glad to announce that we have switched to 100% recyclable paper-based compostable packaging material from 1st of October 2019."



## Bajar launches platform for retailers in offline markets

Bajar, a retail discovery app for retailers, has launched operations with the aim of reshaping the way customers buy products or find retailers. The app, available on Google Play Store and Apple App Store, lets you discover retailers near you, what they sell and if they have any ongoing offers. As a retailer, becoming a Bajar Partner enables you to set-up your “Virtual Store” on the app, which the retailer can add/ edit at any time. As on 1st October 2019, more than 4000 retailers from Delhi are listed on the Bajar platform, with their locations, addresses, contact details, and categories. The app currently has 5,000+

users using the platform, and the number is growing every day.

Speaking about the launch, **Yashraj Bhatia, Founder, Bajar**, said: “Bajar aims to help retailers find customers, and customers to find retailers. Rather than being limited to their stores and shops, retailers can display their products and offers in a digital environment. Customers can find which shops are selling the products they need, and then get in touch with them. We are trying to help retailers get more customers to their store.” He added: “In today’s time, with the economy slowing down, retailers are losing business and facing losses.

We want to give the power back into the hands of the retailers.”

The e-commerce industry has grown exponentially in India. With the digital revolution taking the country by storm, more and more people are getting online. This has led people to refrain from going to markets and instead order products online. Bajar has identified the need for a platform for retailers to sell their products and reach new customers. Over and above that, the customer would be able to rate and review retailers, which would create a great online platform for retail shopping. “We are working towards adding to the



ability of retailers to sell their products through the platform. Just like food delivery, any retailer would be able to deliver orders nearby. It would be a great convenience to both the sellers and the buyers,” said Bhatia.

Other than providing a smooth experience to customers, Bajar partners can use a dedicated app to control their store profiles themselves, without needing any interference from the company.



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## Mondelez India launches a new chocolate taste with Cadbury Dark Milk



Mondelez India has introduced a new taste experience to its thriving bouquet of premium chocolates with Cadbury Dark Milk. Cadbury Dark Milk brings a new taste to the world of chocolate with a superior product experience for those with sophisticated and matured sensibilities. Global icon Aishwarya Rai Bachchan is the face for Cadbury Dark Milk in India.

**Anil Viswanathan, Director, Marketing (Chocolates), Mondelez India,** said, “Mondelez India sees a major opportunity in developing a new taste experience in the chocolate category and Cadbury Dark Milk gives us the first mover advantage of becoming the category

innovator. Our brands play a special role in people’s lives. Increasingly consumers want products that reflect their lifestyle and we have always been at the forefront of creating distinctive products and platforms to address this need. Cadbury Dark Milk is a unique product that offers a heightened delight of a grown-up chocolate. In this binary world of milk and dark chocolate, Cadbury Dark Milk refuses these boundaries that takes the best of both worlds and creates a distinct blend for an evolved, unconventional taste. And there couldn’t have been a better brand ambassador than Aishwarya Rai Bachchan to introduce Cadbury Dark Milk as she truly embodies

the exceptional appeal of this new product innovation with her ground-breaking milestones. Her prestige and repute make her stand out as an accomplished, matured sophisticated individual.”

Speaking on the association, **Aishwarya Rai Bachchan** said, “It is a privilege to be a part of Mondelez India’s new category innovation with Cadbury Dark Milk. Cadbury has always given us a reason to enjoy chocolates the way we like it. Cadbury Dark Milk is a new, premium taste that will surely appeal to chocolate lovers. I like its special packaging and most of all I love the taste, it’s richer, darker, creamier. It has been great fun working on this campaign and I am very excited to share this experience with you and see it come to life!”

The launch of Cadbury Dark Milk will be supported by a 360-degree communication campaign, designed to demonstrate the richer, darker, creamier chocolate experience, which will include a new TVC, innovative Outdoor & Digital campaigns and strong in-store visibility. Priced at Rs. 99 for 72 gm (available in Original – Rich & Creamy variant) and Rs. 199 for 156 gm (available in Original – Rich & Creamy and Salted Caramel – Rich & Creamy variant), Cadbury Dark Milk is all set to take on the chocolate category in India, one bite at a time!

## Bikano India gung-ho on the festive season

Fast food and snacks retailer Bikano, part of Bikanerwala Group, is eyeing 20-25 per cent sales growth this festive season with its expanded product offerings. The retailer is counting on its quality products with attractive packaging to spur sales. All Bikano products have a shelf-life of 4-6 months, which gives convenience to customers to consume the products even after

the festive season. **Ajay Aggarwal, Vice President, Bikano,** said: “This festive season, we are expecting 20 to 25 percent sale growth. Our interest is to create a portfolio for Indian local requirements. To fulfill this, we have come out with product ranges keeping in mind the requirements of people of all age.” He added: “Every year, before Diwali, business meetings are organized in different

cities across the country, in which all the channel partners associated with brand Bikano are invited for exclusive launching of gifts pack and sweets for the festive season. Through this meeting, Bikano provide information on gifts pack and sweets’ content, MRP, weight, etc, to the channel partners so that they can share this info with their valuable customers.” As in the past, Bikano has



introduced many products for this festive season: Kids Zone, Anmol, Rasmol, Shahi Nazrana, Meetha Chatpata, etc, along with two new gift packs named Anand and Shubharambh.





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## UK's leading protein brand 'Myprotein' enters Indian market

UK's leading sports and nutrition brand 'Myprotein' has forayed into India with a strategic partnership with MSM Retail Pvt. Ltd. The company has established a warehouse with a robust distribution network in place to provide quicker delivery services, reduce the average wait span for customers from 25-30 days to 3-5 days.

**Esha Singh, General Manager, Emerging Markets, Nutrition & Beauty Brands – Myprotein**, said, "India is a key market for Myprotein and demand for the products has increased over the years, but due to limited availability, customers had to order products from the UK, which meant long delivery time. As a result, Myprotein now has an official warehouse in Gurugram to

deliver the same assurance of quality and authenticity to our customers in India and we are determined to continue to increase our investments in India over the next few years. This will help us to bring more efficiency into our delivery processes as well as lessen the delivery time for our customers. We have also eased the process of payment by providing local friendly options such as net-banking, e-wallets, local credit and debit cards." She further added, "Supporting the government's initiative, over the next few years, we will look at increasing our footprint in India. We have already started sourcing at various levels in India for our requirements across the business, which will contribute to employment and development in the country."



Myprotein was established with the vision to empower each individual to achieve their health and fitness objectives by making available high-quality nutritional products. It was acquired by British e-commerce company, The Hut Group, in 2011. The group operates over 100 international websites selling fast-moving consumer goods (FMCGs) directly to the consumers through its proprietary e-commerce platform. Today, Myprotein is Europe's number one sports nutrition brand and

caters to the citizens of more than 70 countries. It has consolidated its position as one of the world's most powerful digital-first brands with an active engagement of 6.5 million customers worldwide.

Myprotein offers one of the widest range in sports nutrition with core products like whey protein, casein, bcaa, glutamine, etc. The brand's strength is localization and it would be doing the same and create products specifically for the Indian customers and their needs.

## Foods & Inns acquires Kusum Spice

Foods and Inns Ltd. has acquired Kusum Spices for Rs. 13.99 crore. Under this transaction, Foods & Inn will enter into partnership with a share of 99.99% with Kusum Spices, a partnership firm in the branded spice business under the 47-year old popular household brand 'Kusum Masala'.

Foods & Inn is a listed company on Bombay Stock Exchange and is in the business of manufacturing mango & guava pulp. Its sales turnover for 31st March 2019 was Rs. 340 crore, out of which exports comprise 65%, whereas sales in the domestic market constitute 35%. Most of the customers are Fortune 500 companies, including Coca Cola Corporation and Pepsico. Kusum Spices produces about 1,100 MT of spices and clocked a turnover of Rs. 17.16 crore for the 2018 fiscal.



Announcing the partnership with Kusum Spice, **Bhupendra Dalal, Chairman, Foods and Inns Ltd.**, said, "As part of our business strategy, inorganic acquisitions are key components of drivers of our growth. With Kusum Masala being a household name, this acquisition will lead our transition from being a purely B2B player to a branded B2C one in the branded spice business. We aim to bring in synergy by expanding on

Kusum's distribution channels and private labeling will bring in growth both in revenues and margins and create value for all the shareholders."

Kusum Spice has a presence in the domestic and also export market in Gulf and Africa with an export turnover of approximately 25%, which is around Rs. 4.5 crore. It has been in the business of spice for over 47 years with its factory is situated at Kusum House at Goregaon and will soon shift to Nasik.

As on 31.3.2019, frozen foods company Finns Frozen Pvt. Ltd, which makes frozen snacks such as samosa, onion bhajji naans, and vegetables, merged with Foods and Inns Ltd., which is located at Sinnar near Nasik. Finns frozen division of Foods & Inns itself consumes about 100 MT of spices, which is likely to increase substantially in the coming year.



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## Cargill reduces 2.5 million pounds of plastic in vegetable oil packaging to meet sustainability goals



Cargill has reduced the amount of plastic it uses for its vegetable oil bottles and containers by more than 2.5 million pounds (nearly 1,200 metric tonnes) globally. These plastic reductions will remove nearly 2,900 metric tonnes of greenhouse gases (GHGs) per year from the atmosphere, which is equivalent to removing 616 cars from the road.

“Plastic packaging is a growing concern for many of our customers and consumers because of plastic waste pollution and the environmental impact of producing plastic,” says Tai Ullmann, global sustainability manager for Cargill’s edible oils business. “Using less plastic in the packaging used for our vegetable oils helps customers who have set goals around plastic reduction or recyclability, as well as reducing GHGs.”

In India, Cargill’s popular edible oil brands – Gemini, Sweekar, and NatureFresh, cut approximately 25 percent of the plastic used for select packages,

eliminating 562,000 pounds (255 metric tonnes) of plastic usage in packaging in 2018. This resulted in removing 504 metric tonnes of GHGs per year from the atmosphere. “Cargill is cutting down on the amount of raw plastic used across all platforms and products. For example, Cargill worked with Dow Chemical to reformulate its plastic material, making 90 percent of its plastic packaging recyclable. It has a goal of using 100 percent recyclable packaging for Gemini, Sweekar, and NatureFresh brands by the end of 2020,” says **Simon George, President, Cargill India**. To further raise awareness among consumers, the Cargill oil brands carry the slogan “recycle the present, save the future” on their packaging.

Cargill is also working with the Indian Pollution Control Association (IPCA) to strengthen the collection and processing of used packages from consumers. IPCA has installed dry waste collection centers at important locations to segregate and compact plastic waste before distributing it to co-processing industries and plants. So far, Cargill’s oils business has been able to collect 25 percent of used packages for recycling, but expects those numbers to grow up substantially in 2020.



## METRO Cash & Carry makes its third edition of ‘Own Business Day’ bigger and better

METRO Cash & Carry is back with its third edition of Own Business Day 2019. To raise awareness about the value that own businesses add to the daily lives and to create new opportunities for them, METRO Cash & Carry had launched Own Business Day (OBD) in 2016. OBD is celebrated across 26 countries on the second Tuesday of each October as a tribute to business owners in all the countries in which METRO operates.

This year, the Own Business Day initiative is even bigger and better with participation of self-employed professionals along with HoReCa (Hotels, Restaurants & Caterers) apart from traders, kiranas and other independent businesses. The initiative, that resonates with METRO’s commitment of being ‘Champion for Independent Business’, is part of METRO’s global campaign to celebrate and contribute to the growth of independent businesses and foster their visibility to build a strong network.

For Own Business Day, METRO Cash & Carry supports business owners with an array of special offers and branding opportunities to drive footfall and augment their revenues during the upcoming festive season. In line with its digitalization intervention, METRO provides businesses with its ‘METRO digital hub’ to connect and create exclusive offers such as a special meal, discounted product, event and services exclusively for its customers. The digital hub helps the businesses identify their customers at relevant locations and all special offers shall be displayed on the site’s map to be availed by their end users.

Speaking about the initiative, **Arvind Mediratta, MD & CEO, METRO Cash & Carry India**, said, “We believe that efforts of independent businesses need to be acknowledged and celebrated as they fuel a culture of entrepreneurship in the country, and are a significant contributor to our economic growth. With Own Business Day, we not only try to bring more business to our customers’ doorsteps, but also help enhance their visibility, especially during the festive season, by providing them with various special offers to stay relevant in the competitive retail landscape.”





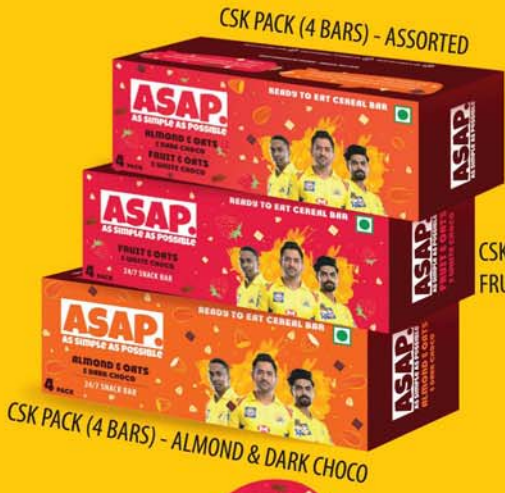
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## Market Update



### ITC's Fabelle introduces 'Dark Milk Chocolate'

Fabelle, the luxury chocolate brand from ITC Ltd, has launched a unique 'Dark Milk' chocolate in the form of Fabelle Dark Gianduja. This offering has been handcrafted by Fabelle Master Chocolatiers who have created a unique blend of dark and milk chocolate that delivers a unique symphony of bitter and sweet chocolate taste, which is enhanced by the nuttiness of the infused roasted Turkish hazelnuts. The new Dark Milk chocolate used in Fabelle Dark Gianduja is perfect for consumers

who seek a balance between sweet and bitter taste of their chocolates.

The Gianduja range from Fabelle has unique offerings made from milk chocolate and also ruby chocolate. The range has received favorable consumer appreciation and become a choice of gifting for the luxury chocolate connoisseur. Keeping with the ethos of the brand of launching one-of-its-kind and inimitable chocolate experiences in India, the new offering of Dark Gianduja made with a unique dark milk chocolate aims to further this endeavor.

The 12 individually packed handcrafted cubes of Dark Gianduja are elegantly wrapped in a butter paper and are then packed in a specially designed golden tin box, which exuberates its luxe quotient and makes it an exclusive gift for the upcoming season. It is priced at INR 950.

Commenting on the launch, **Hemant Malik, Divisional Chief Executive – Foods Division, ITC**

**Ltd.**, said, "The launch of Fabelle Dark Gianduja is a testament to our commitment to deliver unique chocolate experiences to consumers through innovation based expansion. The combination of chocolate and hazelnuts has always been loved by Indian consumers and we have received a very favorable response to our previously launched Gianduja in milk chocolate and ruby chocolate variants. The launch of the new Dark Milk Gianduja is a continuation of our efforts to give one-of-its-kind experience to discerning chocolate connoisseurs."

Fabelle Dark Gianduja will be available across chocolate boutiques in select ITC luxury hotels and premium malls in India. It can also be ordered online on [www.itcstore.in/fabelle](http://www.itcstore.in/fabelle). Consumers across Bangalore, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai and New Delhi can place orders from the comfort of their homes and enjoy doorstep delivery.

## NutriMoo receives more than \$1 million strategic investment from IndoCan Honey

NutriMoo, Gurgaon-based dairy & whole food brand from Credence Whole Foods Pvt. Ltd, has recently received an equity funding worth more than USD 1 million from IndoCan Honey Pvt. Ltd, a north India-based entity built by a group of seasoned businessmen from varied domains.

Credence Whole Foods products are sold under the umbrella brand NutriMoo that promises only 100% pure, fresh, hormone-free and

preservative-free dairy and whole food products that's entirely free from any adulteration. NutriMoo offers traditional products and their variants like Cow Milk, Buffalo Milk, Tea Special Milk, Cow Ghee, Desi Ghee, Dahi (yogurt), Fresh Paneer (cottage cheese), Natural Himalayan Honey, Tulsi Honey Ajwain Honey, Honey with Cinnamon and Chaach (buttermilk) etc.

The company was launched on 1st May 2016 by Amit Sharma and Ajay Yadav. With the core promise of offering 100% pure, fresh, natural and preservative-free products to end-consumers, they plan to quickly scale to all over India. As a strategic investor, IndoCan not only helps them fund their expansion plans, but will also invest in crucial product expansion(s) and backward linkages. It also helps that both companies are chasing the same goal of ultimate health and wellness. As a fully integrated dairy and food products company with state-of-the-art automation to ensure hygiene and innovative standards, the company has created excellent infrastructure.

They have a captive processing plant at Baghpat, UP, well equipped and meets world standards in pasteurization, sterilization and homogenization with a processing capacity of 50,000 Liters per day. They are currently retailing through exclusive outlets, Android and iOS App, and leading online shopping platforms such as Swiggy Stores, Amazon.in and Flipkart.com.

Discussion with other online ordering platforms such as BigBasket, Grofers, Dunzo etc. is in progress.

"We supply milk that is direct from farms to homes within 48 hours, eliminating middlemen. Ghee is made using traditional 'Bilona Method'. Paneer is made under the safest, most hygienic environment by seasoned craftsmen. Himalayan Honey is procured from hand-picked farms in Himalayas. Everywhere we are deeply invested in ensuring quality across our supply chain" says **Amit Sharma, Co-Founder and Director, NutriMoo.**



(L to R): Ajay Yadav (Co-founder & Director, NutriMoo), Anshu Gupta (Director, IndoCan Honey Pvt. Ltd), Amit Sharma (Co-founder & Director, NutriMoo) and Amit Gupta (Director, IndoCan Honey Pvt. Ltd)

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# How supermarkets can sell more

Retail industry experts offer five ways to grow business.

By **Barbara Sax**

**T**he retail landscape is more competitive than ever, and shopper loyalty continues to be elusive for many retailers. For supermarket operators to increase sales this year and beyond, they'll need to focus on driving traffic, boosting basket size and building shopper loyalty in new ways. Following are five areas on which grocers can concentrate to up their store game:

## **ELEVATE THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**

"It is increasingly important for retailers to understand what is important to their core shoppers, as well as those shoppers that they are leaking to competitive outlets," says Colin Stewart, SVP, Center of Shared Business Intelligence at Jacksonville, Fla.-based sales, marketing and services company Acosta.





Notes Thom Blischok, chairman and CEO of The Dialogic Group LLC, in Phoenix: “With 40 percent of the center store going away by 2023, retailers will have to improve the in-store experience, which will include grocerants.”

Diana Sheehan, director at Norwalk, Conn.-based Kantar Retail, agrees. “The retailers that are going to be successful in driving traffic to the stores will be those that have created compelling service offers to convince shoppers to come in even when they don’t need to buy anything,” she says. “Hy-Vee has done a great job with its dietitians, their foodservice offer and now even connecting to fitness programs like Orangetheory. They are creating a destination store, not just a grocery store.”

While shoppers are laser-focused on value, Stewart notes that low price isn’t the only way to deliver value to consumers. “Shoppers often associate convenience with value, so supermarkets win when they focus on areas that provide convenience like foodservice, prepared foods and high-quality meal kits that provide shoppers with convenient solutions,” he points out.

Eric Richard, education coordinator at the Madison, Wis.-based International Dairy Deli Bakery Association, believes that consumers are looking for their retailers to be a source of information, and that supermarkets can differentiate themselves from other channels by becoming places where consumers can learn about food — or their overall health. “Providing them with information they can’t get elsewhere is becoming extremely important,” he says. “That can mean boosting prepared food departments, providing consumers with ideas for preparing meals, offering samplings or cooking classes.”

For other shoppers, value means in-store services, and health-and-wellness offerings, cooking classes, wine selection (and tastings), and nutritionists drive more trips and more time in store for shoppers.

Frictionless transactions at the front end of the store to expedite the checkout process are an important part of the overall experience and can be a deal-breaker for shoppers. Determining how technology will change the operating model in the store, from robots to cashless checkout, will figure into that strategy. According to Stewart, that includes options like self-checkout, scan and go, “or simply providing great customer service as shoppers complete their trip.”

For his part, Blischok stresses the importance of the in-store human touch. “Retailers need to empower employees to do great things,” he advises. “Helping employees realize localization and improve the shopping experience, then rewarding them for doing great things with shoppers, will drive real and profitable growth.”

## 2 HONE THE ASSORTMENT

The importance of the right assortment can’t be overestimated. “Bringing in the right mix of product innovation and creating new category staples will be essential to driving traffic into the store,” asserts Nicky Jackson, founder and CEO of San Francisco-based RangeMe. “Online channels will continue to expand, and social currency for brands will be part of sourcing decisions to offer more points of access for consumers.”

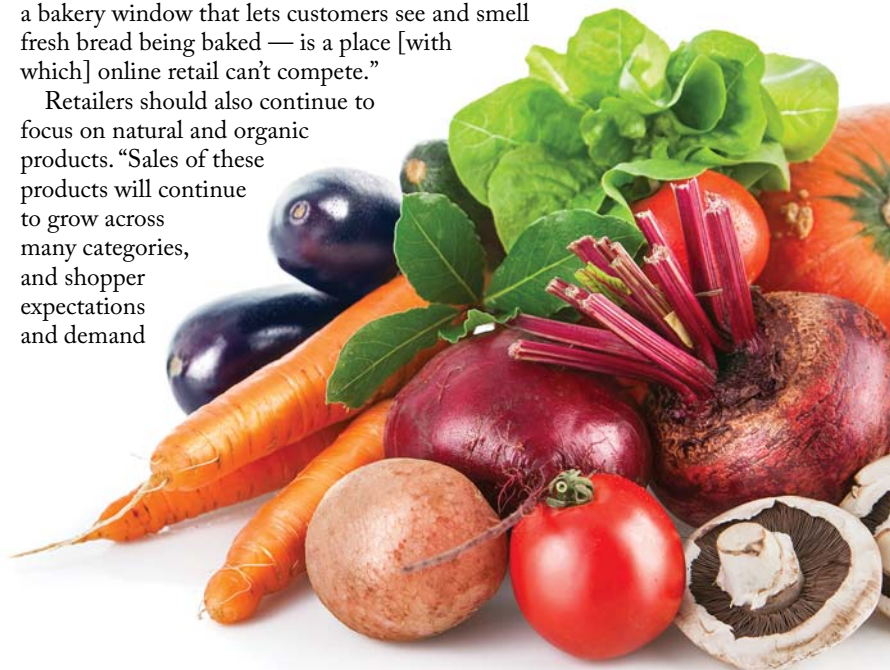
That means paying attention to seasonal sales opportunities. Retailers often miss opportunities for incremental seasonal sales, because of gross-margin goals and concern about being over-SKU’d, so buyers become less willing to take risks by adding seasonal products with short availability windows, according to the Newark, Del.-based Produce Marketing Association (PMA). Some of the most effective product promotions are short-term and spark customer excitement. Creating a themed pumpkin patch outside the store, rather than featuring a single bin of pumpkins in the produce department, will generate excitement in regard to purchasing.

Jackson observes that some key trends to watch are products with clean and transparent food labels, offerings where taste is as important as health, and the continued focus on social responsibility, leading back to a strong founder story.

## 3 CONCENTRATE ON FRESH AND NATURAL/ORGANIC

Fresh is an area in which supermarkets have a natural advantage over other channels — especially online. “People want to see, feel and smell fresh products,” says Richard. “Fresh is outpacing center stores in sales, so focusing on that area and finding ways to further engage consumers — like a bakery window that lets customers see and smell fresh bread being baked — is a place [with which] online retail can’t compete.”

Retailers should also continue to focus on natural and organic products. “Sales of these products will continue to grow across many categories, and shopper expectations and demand





“Bringing in the right mix of product innovation and creating new category staples will be essential to driving traffic into the store.”

— Nicky Jackson  
RangeMe

continue to increase, especially amongst younger shoppers,” observes Stewart. “Merchandising natural and organic products helps to enhance shopper perception of the retailer’s focus on health and wellness while trading shoppers up to higher quality and usually higher-priced products.” He recommends leveraging differentiated shelf tags or signage to signal a commitment to natural/organic and other good-for-you products.

**4 BOOST OMNICHANNEL REACH**  
Blischok believes that the No. 1 issue facing retailers is rationalizing how they’re going to implement omnichannel. “There’s a lot of investments being made in shopper engagement, in online data and product information, but we’re in the age of experimentation,” he says. “When Nielsen and FMI did the readiness assessment for omnichannel, only 10 percent of retailers said they were ready, so that’s a huge play. The ability to have a profitable omnichannel strategy is critical.”

The second part of that is understanding fulfillment. “How will they make bricks and mortar, clicks and mortar, home delivery, clicks and lockers profitable without having to incur a huge amount of costs and a fundamental shift in the picking model?” muses Blischok. “Being able to think through the issue of cost-effective fulfillment is key.”

“Retailers will need to evolve how they are engaging shoppers in a digital universe, from their apps to their emails to their website,” notes Sheehan. “Are they engaging their shoppers in ways that are personalized? Are they targeting shoppers with what they are looking for?”

“Basket size increases by 36 percent, from an average of \$64 to \$87, when the consumer has been digitally influenced,” points out Andrea Bell, principal at Deloitte Consulting, in New York, citing research undertaken by her company. “Retailers need to capture that by determining how to digitally influence their consumers along the path to purchase. This requires creating an emotional connection with

the consumer around their experience. Emotional connection is the most important attribute [of] driving satisfaction with a retailer. This likely will require teaming with consumer products manufacturers to create the emotional connection across both the retailer and the brands the consumer is purchasing.”

According to Stewart, digital can be integrated into the shopping experience in several ways:

**Education:** Leverage mobile apps to inform shoppers and educate them on everything from where to find products in the store, to nutritional information, to solutions such as recipes.

**Shopping:** Whether via click-and-collect or home delivery, offer an extended assortment of products that aren’t on the shelf. Digital should provide shoppers with options on how they can interact with the brick-and-mortar store or have products delivered to their homes.

**Motivation:** Consumers can be motivated through loyalty programs, especially in customized ways that provide a personalized experience that’s relevant to shoppers.

**Partnerships:** To expedite digital activation, consider teaming with third parties to move quickly into these new digital capabilities.

With online penetration set to increase in the United States, Jackson says that exciting new meal solutions and savvy online delivery options will be at the forefront of convenience solutions. And with consumers becoming more confident about purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables online, PMA notes that supermarkets have an opportunity to improve their digital services and boost customer satisfaction with more fresh offerings.

“Consumers are consistently shopping in a channel-less environment,” observes Bell. “The same consumer is shopping in store [and] using click-and-collect and home delivery. The key is to understand what your consumers are looking for, focus the value proposition there and identify channels where [there’s] a willingness to pay. We are seeing that one size does not fit all.”

**5 REDUCE SHRINK**  
Many retailers are focused on improving losses in departmental shrink. As comparable sales are trending up and greater competition is resulting retail price pressures, retailers can develop efficiencies in how product moves through the supply chain and into their stores, according to PMA, which adds that this can be accomplished through efficient data-based ordering. As there’s often a gap in store-level staff knowledge regarding storage and handling, retailers can improve shrink rates through proper best practices, staff education and efficient ordering, thereby creating more consistent on-shelf product-level conditions without adversely affecting sales. **PG**





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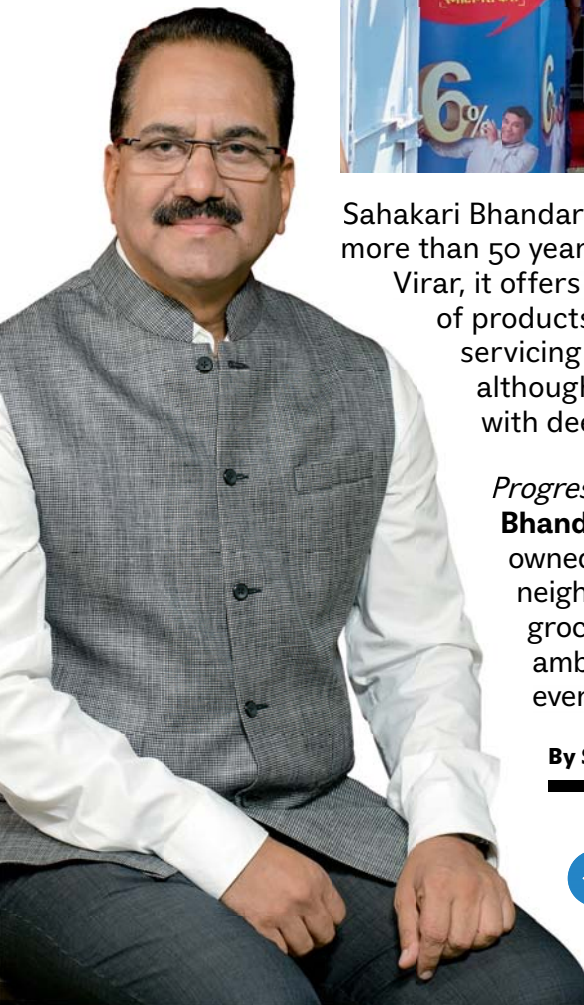
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# From a staid consumer co-operative to a modern and eco-friendly grocery chain



Sahakari Bhandar is Mumbai's most visited and preferred grocery store for more than 50 years. With 24 branches strategically located from Colaba to Virar, it offers convenience, good quality, safety and consistent availability of products to its customers. The legacy of trust continues since 1966, servicing more than millions of happy families. Sahakari Bhandar, although a co-operative, is an exciting blend of modern retailing with deep understanding of daily needs of its customers.

*Progressive Grocer* spoke to **Sanjay Shete, Chairman – Sahakari Bhandar**, about the metamorphosis of a once sleepy state-owned cooperative retail chain into a bustling, bright and swanky neighborhood store chain today, which sells everything from groceries and frozen foods to household care and with a pleasant ambience and hygiene that have the stamp of professionalism everywhere.

By Sanjay Kumar



**Sanjay Shete**  
Chairman – Sahakari Bhandar



### What is the customer proposition and market positioning of Sahakari Bhandar store chain today?

Sahakari Bhandar is primarily a neighborhood grocery store fulfilling the monthly baskets of consumers in and around the store's neighborhood. We sell all the day-to-day necessities – fruits and vegetables, frozen foods, bakery, food grains, FMCG products, household care, general purpose items, among others. The product range also includes hand-made diya batti to an eco-friendly Ganesha idol, home-made (not branded) fresh dosa atta, chutneys, biscuits, etc. Basically, the stores have all the day-to-day necessities expected of an ideal convenience store.

With its positioning of 'Sahi Quality, Sahi Price!', people from the middle-income group and local residents looking for a fair price deal form a major part of the target group of Sahakari Bhandar stores. Women initially formed the main target group; however, over the past decade or so, with all the infrastructural changes made at the stores, thanks to the JV with Reliance, consumers come to Sahakari Bhandar with their families and children to enjoy the overall shopping experience.

We have a loyal base of customers who have been shopping at our stores for over 10, 15, 20 years and more, thanks to the quality of the products and their very competitive price. Also, due to the co-operative legacy of 40 years, the strategic locations of the stores, and their fair price image, Sahakari Bhandar enjoys a strong customer connect, which we are determined to build on and improve further.

Besides our neighborhood convenience stores, we have four new Smart SB stores, which are positioned as destination stores.



### Tell us about the location strategy of your stores.

Sahakari Bhandar outlets are located at 24 locations in Mumbai – Colaba to Virar and in primary trading areas having high density of customers to the population. These locations mainly have (unplanned) kirana stores selling maximum of two category products. This where Sahakari Bhandar comes into play with almost all everyday use items sold under one roof! All the locations of or branches as well as their phone numbers are listed at the back of the bags available at the store.

### Which are your top-selling PLs in food and what are your plans to augment and expand your PLs?

Our Private Label in staples is a leading contributor in that category. We are working on adding to our PL...recently we have added paper products to our private label range.

### With 24 stores in different localities of Mumbai, how do you manage your product assortment?

The assortment at SB stores is neighborhood-specific and based on our catchment study. We also work on community connect activities in our catchments, which gives us a better understanding of the requirements in different localities.

### How are you making use of technology for more efficient store operations?

Our stores have embraced enterprise resource planning with (ERP) software. We also use SAP to manage the front-end and back-end operations of the chain.

### How would you describe the path-to-purchase journey and the shopping experience at SB stores?

The design of SB stores is based on the allocation of floor space into selling space, merchandise space, personnel space, and customer space. All the stores are air-conditioned and sport a glass facade. The

**Mumbai-based Sahakari Bhandar was formed in 1966 as a government-owned consumer co-operative. For the next 40 years, it continued to operate as a consumer cooperative with its chain of retail stores located strategically in and around Mumbai.**

## SAHAKARI BHANDAR: FACT SHEET

Retailer/ Brand Name: **Sahakari Bhandar**

Launch Year: **1966**

Parent Company: **The Colaba Central Co-op Consumers Wholesale & Retail Stores Ltd.**

Operating Structure of Stores: **Leased**

Size of Store: **1,000 sq.ft. - 20,000 sq.ft.**

Total Number of Stores as on date: **24 grocery stores plus 6 pharmacies**

Total Retail Area as on date: **1,20,000 sq.ft.**

Number of States/ Cities present in as on date: **Only Mumbai**

Annual Turnover: **Rs.390 crore**

Same Store Sales Growth %: **10%**

SKU Count in Store: **Approx 6000+**

Number of Employees: **750**





**In 2006, Reliance Industries inked a deal with the co-operative to handle their complete supply chain requirement.**

stores are open from 9 am to 9 pm through 7 days a week. Trolleys are arranged at the entrance and parking is available at the entrance of the store. With soft music playing in the background and an open assortment display of products, the consumers are encouraged to look and feel the products.

There are neatly labeled bays for consumers to easily identify and move to the required bay. Each bay has products arranged on the shelves at an easily reachable level. Products are arranged as per the categories in a rack display with competing brands placed on the same shelf so as to give the consumer a wider range to choose from. Products are arranged neatly on the shelves – heavy packets are kept at the base so that the consumer can easily pick it up from there. The shelves are arranged in a

way that the highest one is just above the eye level and consumers can easily reach out for products.

All the stores have uniformed staff, and store personnel are extremely friendly and helpful. We have a Customer Care Centre too for the consumers in case they want to return the goods or replace and exchange the goods under warranty that are damaged, etc. We also operate a phone-based home delivery model called SB Suvidha.

Over the past few years, every aspect of the shop floor — shelves, racks, freezers, chillers, cash counters and hygiene — has been upgraded and refurbished to make grocery shopping a pleasant and enjoyable experience at SB stores.

**How would you like grocery shoppers to perceive your store brand and what have been your initiatives towards fulfilling your customer promise and delivering on your brand values?**

With our promise of offering “Sahi Quality and Sahi Price”, the SB brand has been consistent in delivering quality products along with the promise of food safety to its customers. Thanks to our supply chain strength, our stores are known for 100% product availability together with competitive pricing, offering service with a smile, and giving consumers the benefit of value-added promos and schemes.



**THE RETAIL JOURNEY OF MUMBAI'S ICONIC CO-OPERATIVE NEIGHBORHOOD STORE CHAIN**

Mumbai-based Sahakari Bhandar was formed in 1966 as a government owned consumer co-operative. For the next 40 years, it continued to operate as a consumer cooperative with its chain of retail stores located strategically in and around Mumbai providing essential commodities at a reasonable price. Retailing consumer goods, food and grocery and other general purpose items, Saharkari Bhandar stores gained in popularity for their affordability, self-service convenience, discounted pricing and convenience of location.

Consumer co-operatives like Sahakari Bhandar in Mumbai and Super Bazaar in Delhi were set up as part of the national policy to protect the interest of common consumers. They were developed as a democratic institution, owned, managed, and controlled by its own members. To some extent, the presence of consumer co-operatives has worked as a benevolent force of market for the common man, successfully protecting their interest and stabilizing the prices.

In 2006, Reliance Industries, seeing the inherent prime location potential of

Sahakari Bhandar stores, inked a deal with the co-operative to handle their complete supply chain requirement; wherein, Reliance does the sourcing for Sahakari Bhandar, directly from its suppliers, and, in turn, is paid for the goods by the co-operative at a later agreed point of time.

This arrangement has been a big positive for Sahakari Bhandar. Of course, the most crucial assistance Sahakari Bhandar has got from Reliance is in sourcing. No longer does the store chain need to deal with individual companies for supplies. Reliance does that directly and is paid by the store chain only after the goods are sold. That means a longer credit line for the Sahakari Bhandar stores.

The joint venture with Reliance helped Sahakari Bhandar get its mojo back in the face of intensifying competition from a plethora of supermarkets since the retail boom of the past two decades. There's more variety, prices are lower and the stores look bright and clean. Add to these the fact that all Sahakari Bhandar stores are now open all seven days of the week and for longer hours a day.



Currently, Sahakari Bhandar operates 24 grocery outlets in Mumbai. With its growing sales volumes, the chain has been able to reduce the price of its products further, passing on the savings to its customers and thus ensuring that they get the full value for money. Looking back, the tie-up between Reliance and Sahakari Bhandar has been a win-win for both – Sahakari Bhandar proved to be a launch pad for Reliance's national supply chain project while it taught the once staid co-operative how to play with the big boys.

Sahakari Bhandar completed 50 years of retail operations in 2016, becoming one of the oldest co-ops in the city of Mumbai. It was awarded the best Co-op chain in the state of Maharashtra, by the Govt. of Maharashtra.



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The assortment at SB stores is neighborhood-specific and based on catchment study. It also work on community-connect activities in its catchments.

**Tell us about any interesting concepts or innovations that you have introduced at your stores to make shopping more consumer-centric.**

“Buy any 1 & Get any 1 free” is the new selling mantra and we are leveraging this formula to the hilt through prominent displays and product adjacencies. Also, from time to time, we conduct various shopping-centric activities, which include distribution of periodical leaflets, SMS blast, Train Jingles, Diwali Dhamaka, SCAP, among other activities.

As a responsible retailer, we conduct and carry out various community-building -and consumer-connect initiatives, which have helped the SB brand establish a special place in the localities we serve in.

**Can you elaborate on some of your community building and consumer-connect initiatives as a retailer?**

Being a responsible retailer, we believe that “when a store becomes a good member of the society, commerce also flourishes”. We were first retailer in Mumbai to work on reducing plastic carry bags. To



promote this cause, we first distributed 50K free cotton bags, and also offered 0.5% discount to the customer bringing cotton bags.

- We launched a Tetrapak recycling initiative in our stores, wherein SB stores installed collection bins so that a customer could bring back a used Tetrapak carton back and deposit the same. We recycled those cartons into note books, school benches and garden benches. School benches were donated to municipal/ local schools so that children could sit on the bench instead of the floor. In all, we have recycled 3.2 million Tetrapak cartons, donated 250 school benches and 175 Garden benches so far. Our initiative was featured in the *Limca Book of Records* and *National Geographic*. Today many schools, corporates, institutes, housing societies, and food service operators are actively involved in this project that we started.
- Another initiative is to train and recruit differently-abled boys/girls, and offering them a job and professional recognition. Today, SB has recruited almost 50 plus staff from this pool who are working and earning a proud living.
- At our large stores, we have installed plastic bottle crushing machines, apart from putting in place E-waste collection bins.
- Every SB store has tied up with a local NGO and helps support the cause of the NGO.
- Every store periodically cleans/ sweeps the street/ neighborhood/ nearest railway station under the Swachhata Abhiyan.

**How would you describe your strengths and achievements so far?**

We are leaders in Mumbai city, a trusted brand with a legacy of more than 50 years. Our supply chain is our key strengths thanks to our partnership with the largest retailer in India.

**What is your roadmap for the future?**

We are looking at moving to Tier II/III cities of India where we see a great potential for our format. **PG**

## PROMOTING A GREEN AGENDA THROUGH RESPONSIBLE RETAILING

Sahakari Bhandar is bringing an exemplary blend of modern retailing and green initiatives as part of its business philosophy. The retailer believes that when a store becomes a good member of the society, commerce also flourishes. In keeping with this spirit, the retail chain has been undertaking several community service programs geared towards promoting a greener and cleaner environment.

This social and environmental initiative first took wing in 2009 with the launch of its ‘Go Green’ campaign, in partnership with an NGO. Sahakari Bhandar distributed 10,000 cotton bags free of cost to its top customers, explaining to them that if they bring the cotton bag back when purchasing at the store, they would be entitled to a 0.5% discount. Simultaneously, the store chain also started charging customers for plastic carry bags.

Customers saw this as a very positive step as a responsible retailer. The response to these initiatives was overwhelming and the cost of the plastic bag came down by 60 per cent. This way, Sahakari Bhandar was the harbinger in adopting the ‘Polluter Pays’ principle, which was later adopted and spearheaded by the government.

With a vision to create eco-conscious citizens who adopt recycling, the chain has a tie-up with Tetra Pak India Pvt. Ltd. As part of the ‘Go Green with Tetra Pak recycling’ campaign, recycled Tetra Pak cartons are converted into composite sheets and paper and processed into products like roofing sheets, furniture, pen stands, photo frames, garden benches, school benches, etc. The more recent initiatives include ‘Bin Se Bench Tak’, which is a campaign designed for housing societies, schools and corporates. The campaign is creating far-reaching impact and already hundreds of corporate, educational institutions, restaurants, and societies are participating actively in the campaign, which now boasts of 37 public collection centres at Sahakari Bhandar and select Reliance Fresh stores.

The effort has helped the chain to donate garden benches, school desks and recycling bins so far. These initiatives have also helped Sahakari Bhandar earn a place in the *Limca Book of Records* and receive adulatory coverage from media channels like *National Geographic*.





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**Distribution Redefined**



# Ready or Not

Growth in away-from-home eating means supermarkets must continue to improve their fresh prepared food offerings.

By **Lynn Petrak**

**I**f rotisserie chicken spun a new competitive advantage for supermarkets a couple of decades ago, today's prepared food offerings reflect an even greater turn of fate — and arguably fortune — for grocers.

Although competition for the consumer food dollar remains tight, with supermarkets vying with restaurants and meal kit delivery services to provide fast, simple and appetite-appealing meals, the outlook for grocery prepared foods remains positive.

Several research organizations project continued expansion and success of prepared foods offered in supermarket settings. In an October 2016 brief, Mike Kostyo, senior publications manager of Chicago-based Datassential, declared that supermarket prepared food departments are the fastest-growing segment of the foodservice industry, and predicted that the category will grow 3.8 percent in 2017.

Prepared foods accounted for 58 percent of the \$24 billion in deli sales in mid-2016 and are considered an emerging driver of growth, according to “The Power

of Fresh Prepared/Deli,” a study commissioned by the Fresh Foods Leadership Council of the Arlington, Va.-based Food Marketing Institute (FMI).

Rick Stein, FMI's VP of fresh foods, says that supermarkets are doing well in this area for a variety of reasons. “One thing that supermarkets have to their advantage is that their food safety has been at the high end of consumers' trust,” Stein says. “Also, they are differentiating themselves because consumers are already buying groceries — they often go to the grocery store, they know where to park, which aises to go down, which checkers to talk to. So most supermarkets have a good brand already, and consumers know and trust them.”

Supermarkets also have a leg up over some meal kit delivery services. During his 2017 trend forecast webinar, “Supermarket Guru” Phil Lempert contended that meal kit delivery services may encounter some obstacles. “More stores are starting to have meal kits similar to the ones you'd get from HelloFresh or Blue Apron, but less expensive,”





Lempert noted,” so I see in-store meal kits continuing to rise because of that meal kit phenomenon.”

For their part, retailers report a growing emphasis on prepared foods. Earlier in 2016, FMI commissioned research to survey retailers representing 8,000 stores, focusing on the sophistication of supermarket fresh prepared foods.

While 8 percent of respondents reported total store sales growth of more than 5 percent, 69 percent reported that same level of growth or much higher in their prepared food departments. In addition, 88 percent of the store banners polled said that they have a corporate executive chef on staff.

Wakefern Food Corp., the largest member-owned retail cooperative in the United States, has experienced growth in prepared foods as its members “push the envelope” with their offerings, according to Geoffrey Wexler, VP of foodservice for the Keasbey, N.J.-based company.

“We know that the expectations and demands of today’s customers are significantly different from those just five years ago. Our consumers are far more food-centric and food savvy,” Wexler says, adding that such savviness translates to a more discerning shopper. “Today’s consumers demand transparency in product origins, ingredients and production; seek out mission-based retail options; support hyperlocal products; and demand quality.”

Other retailers have homed in on, and responded to, changing consumer knowledge of, and preferences for, prepared foods.

“As food retailers continue to prove to customers that they can deliver fresh and high-quality prepared foods offerings that meet the needs of their busy schedules, customers’ expectations of these offerings also evolve,” says Dan Donovan, spokesman for Pittsburgh-based grocery chain Giant Eagle Inc. “As they do in other departments, such as produce when possible, many customers are interested in prepared foods offerings that are more healthful, locally or regionally sourced, and personalized.”

### Variety Show

Employing chefs on staff is one way to boost a prepared food department, especially at a time of strong competition with restaurants and other take-home or make-at-home meal providers. “Retailers are investing a lot in this area,” Stein notes. “There are

more corporate chefs and more store chefs than there have ever been.”

Chefs can lend authority and innovation to prepared foods, qualities that resonate with consumers. According to the “Power of Fresh Prepared/Deli” study, although 96 percent of shoppers purchase deli/fresh prepared foods once a year, only 12 percent think of visiting the deli regularly when deciding what to do instead of cooking dinner; the report emphasizes that food retailers who want to stay competitive with foodservice “need to focus on elevating the profile of deli/fresh prepared as a key differentiator and thus the driver of sales for the entire store.”

By hiring chefs and focusing on flavor, many grocery stores have already elevated the profile of their offerings. Datassential’s report, for example, revealed that a third of consumers say that the variety and quality of prepared foods have improved.

To stay competitive in terms of quality and variety, Kostyo says that grocers and in-house chefs should continue to find ways to think outside the box. “Now that supermarket prepared foods are competing with nearby coffee shops, fast-casuals and other trendy restaurant concepts, not to mention growing delivery services, retailers really have to start broadening their view and looking at what’s happening across the industry to understand what customers want,” he advises.

Anne-Marie Roerink, principal at San Antonio-based 210 Analytics, which conducted research for the “Power of Fresh Prepared/Deli” study, agrees that grocers and grocery chefs should keep that question in mind — What do consumers want? — as they develop their prepared food offerings.

Roerink suggests that stores first meet baseline expectations on fresh prepared staples like rotisserie chicken, sandwiches and pizzas, and then work on other, up-and-coming items. “Once the basics are perfected, stores can expand to become a true deli destination that is a viable restaurant alternative in the eyes of the shopper. This includes a much wider variety of items of on-trend foods to elevate the consumer perception,” she says, noting that grocery stores are well positioned to deliver on innovation. “Grocery stores that have been able to build a reputation and destination by innovating and



**Today’s consumers demand transparency in product origins, ingredients and production; seek out mission-based retail options; support hyperlocal products; and demand quality.**

— Geoffrey Wexler  
Wakefern Food Corp.





“Grocery stores that have been able to build a reputation and destination by innovating and staying above the trend with flavors, ingredients and customizable options have given restaurants a run for their money.”

— Anne-Marie Roerink  
210 Analytics



staying above the trend with flavors, ingredients and customizable options have given restaurants a run for their money.”

“You’re starting to see supermarkets with a station for pizza, a station for salad, and a station for sushi or Mexican food,” Stein concurs. “They can switch those over time, like maybe switching sushi to Mediterranean sandwiches, if those become popular. While variance is important, you have to have mainstays like rotisserie and fried chicken, and grab-and-go sandwiches.”

On the topic of customization, Kostyo says that grocery prepared food programs have an edge in not only giving customers what they want, but also helping them create their own meals.

“Consumers love customization. In fact, consumers chose customizable hot pizza as the No. 1 unique offering that they wanted to see in the supermarket prepared foods area, while made-to-order burritos and tacos also scored high,” he observes. That trend can be expected to continue as more Millennials and Generation Z consumers come of age. “They are used to the personalized experience at a fast-casual, or ordering exactly what they want from their phone or an in-store ordering system,” Kostyo notes.

### Working Together

As they offer prepared foods that provide customers with the flavors and formats they seek, grocers can bolster their success through collaboration. “Suppliers can also step in and help operators understand what’s going on in the market — the concepts, menu items and ingredients that are trending on menus and popular with consumers,” Kostyo recommends.

Donovan points to the benefits of collaboration, from a retailer’s perspective. “Just as our customers

are often starved for time, retailers, too, must continue to find efficiencies in time and resources when delivering these delicious, high-quality meal solutions,” he says. “Suppliers have a great opportunity to create unique partnerships by offering solutions such as bundling components, allowing retail team members to spend less time creating dishes and more time servicing the customer.”

Those who supply ingredients and products to grocers for prepared foods say that they are proactively looking at trends and shopper demands in the R&D process.

Greg Powers, CEO of Boulder Organic Foods, in Niwot, Colo., heads a company that works directly with retailers “to develop new profiles that reflect consumer preferences on flavor, nutrition and ingredients. Since all of our products are ready to eat and represent the ultimate comfort food, we try to stand apart from the field by offering organic and gluten-free foods that are healthier than most alternatives,” he says, citing newer profiles that represent a clean-label version of traditional offerings such as tomato bisque or potato corn chowder.

Houston-based Perfect Fit Meals is another supplier seeking to fill in the gaps for healthy prepared foods, with fresh-made heat-and-eat portion-controlled meals. “In the grocery segment, a lot of people don’t realize there is a healthy prepared option,” notes Andrew Hsueh, Perfect Fit’s president and founder. His company’s prepared foods are high in protein and fiber, and “low in everything else,” Hsueh asserts.

Likewise, the current consumer clamor for protein can be a boon for suppliers and their retail partners.

“We have experienced requests in the hot-food deli section, with offerings like hot bars and take-home seafood protein components to supplement



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other food groups,” says James Faro, director of sales for National Fish & Seafood, in Gloucester, Mass. “Also, many of our retail partners ask for biannual to quarterly innovations to complement the weather season or holiday season.”

### Making the Connection

Beyond serving prepared foods that fit shoppers’ tastes and preferences, stores can maximize sales and differentiate themselves in how they promote and merchandise the items.

From her conversations with shoppers as part of the research for the “Power of Fresh Prepared/Deli” study, Roerink discovered that one of the biggest findings was how the majority of shoppers only know about a store’s prepared food program by seeing it or experiencing it for themselves.

“Retailers have an enormous opportunity to connect with shoppers in meaningful ways at the crucial planning hour with daily specials, meal ideas, mix-and-match ideas, using social media, mobile and text messages,” she says. “That requires shopper buy-in and trust, but if retailers can prove to be part of the ever-present ‘what’s for dinner?’ dilemma, they can quickly rise as a viable restaurant alternative that shoppers deem healthier and less expensive.”

Kostyo suggests making the prepared food area a convenient destination instead of just setting out foods and hoping shoppers will come. According to Datassential’s findings, shoppers want menu boards and limited-time offers so they can try new foods; they also have high expectations for speed of service, staff friendliness and décor.

Additionally, supermarkets can distinguish their offerings and connect with consumers by providing healthier or wholesome choices in their prepared food sections and letting consumers know about those options.

“One way in which retailers are educating customers is through increased ingredient labeling, particularly as prepared foods continue to be an attractive solution for families,” Giant Eagle’s Donovan says. “This trend has been a healthy challenge to retailers to be more mindful during the recipe creation process, without compromising on the need to deliver a delicious-tasting item or meal.”

In addition to labeling, other packaging elements can lead to more effective merchandising of prepared foods. “Packaging is becoming very important,” Stein asserts, adding that consumers are interested in packaging that protects the integrity of prepared foods, is attractive and, when possible, is environmentally friendly.

“Also, packaging can generate more sales, depending on the packaging you use. Labels, for example, connote quality and food safety. I really think supermarkets are leading the way with prepared foods packaging.”

Suppliers that provide packaged prepared foods also focus on packaging as part of the overall product profile. Perfect Fit Meals, for example, is developing new packaging that will allow customers a better view of the product, so “that what you see is what you get,” as Hsueh puts it.

### Staying Competitive

Looking ahead, the pace of innovation in prepared foods is set to continue.

“As a differentiator, prepared foods afford us a tangible way to continue to compete against club stores, dollar stores and alternative formats that could possibly lure customers away,” notes Wakefern’s Wexler.

“Moving towards the future, we will continue to invest in programming that addresses the shifting meal preferences of our customers. From an innovation standpoint, it’s an exciting time to be in this dynamic industry.”

In his long-term forecast, Lempert predicts that prepared foods will likely undergo another iteration as the buying and selling landscape changes.

“We’ll see delivery-only restaurants and delivery-only grocery stores,” Lempert says, noting the buzz around the new Amazon Go store at which shoppers use a mobile app to automatically purchase products in a digital shopping cart, eliminating the need for in-store checkout. “They are making prepared foods in the store ready to pick up and go.” **PG**

**Supermarkets can distinguish their offerings and connect with consumers by providing healthier or wholesome choices in their prepared food sections and letting consumers know about those options.**







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# The Favorite Foods of our Times

By Sanjay Kumar

Thanks to the rapid strides in food processing and packaging technology, the ready-to-eat/ cook food category is witnessing a surge in consumer popularity and acceptance. The category is witnessing great innovation by brands and retailers. Whereas brands are introducing new range of merchandise that is different from the conventional ones – ready-to-eat meal options and attractive packing (zip lock) – retailers are selling region-specific products to be served in kitchens, which not only give an option for consumers to try them before they buy but also create greater awareness about the category.

**T**he Indian food and grocery market is the world's sixth-largest currently, with retail contributing 70 per cent of sales. Within the country's total food market, the share of Food Processing industry is 32 per cent – making it one of the largest industries in India and ranked fifth in terms of production, consumption, export and expected growth. It is believed that the Food Processing industry will be a \$25 billion market in

India by 2020. Out of which, the serviceable metro market is expected to be close to almost \$20 billion.

Under the processed food category, the demand for ready to eat/cook products has improved drastically over the years, mainly due to the convenience that they provide. In today's fast-paced lifestyle, time is valuable and the ease of preparation and convenience has improved the sales of ready-to-eat/ cook products to a large extent.



Indian food companies have two descriptions for pre-cooked branded foods: ready to eat (RTE), the type of food that just needs to be heated up and served; and ready to cook (RTC), which needs few ingredients to be added and cooked. In other words, ready to cook and ready-to-eat products are either pre-processed (ready to cook) or processed foods (ready to eat). Once a product is pre-processed, it loses its “fresh” status. Most people are aware of that and still prefer to purchase them for the sake of convenience.

RTE/ RTC products are also better known as Convenience Food – a category that has been prevalent and popular in western countries for a long time now. The factors that lead Indian consumers to purchase these products are convenience in preparation, sensory appeal, affordable pricing and being preservative free. “Globally, the demand for ready-to-eat/ cook products has been increasing over the last few years on account of busier lifestyle of consumers today and their rising income levels. Similar factors are also fuelling the growth in the packaged food

sector in India,” says **Shashi Bhatia**, co-founder of Mintsprint Foods & Beverages, a Bangalore based FMCG start-up with a clear focus on RTE food products (curry spreads range being the flagship) under the brand Kalchi.

Increased employment opportunities have increased migration of people from tier I and tier II cities to the metropolises, which is an important driver for RTE/ RTC food products in the country. There has also been a shift witnessed in the customers’ focus from price to quality in the recent years, particularly in the urban and a few semi-urban areas. Consumers are drifting from openly or loosely sold food products to the consumption of hygienically packaged fortified RTE foods. The past few years have seen a tremendous growth of the RTE/ RTC segment due to high consumer acceptance for convenience food nationwide.

But there was a time when this category was represented only by papads and a few pioneer brands like Parampara and Kitchens of India. The adaptation was very low and category growth was limited. The consumer ecosystem was not open to this category as it is now. But with the changes in consumer demographics, the past five years have seen a big change in the consumer buying behavior and in consumer perception towards this category.

Notwithstanding the shifts in consumer perception and buying behavior, even today the ready-to-eat/ cook food category is still in its infancy. That is because the market for RTE/ RTC was practically non-existent until about thirty years ago. The ready-to-eat category was commercially first introduced to the country in 1987, but suffered a slow beginning with consumers preferring traditional cooking. During this period and till the late Nineties, Tasty Bites was the only brand of RTE available in the Indian market. Due to a lack of acceptance, Tasty Bites had to be withdrawn from the Indian markets and is now available only in export markets.

By the turn of the millennium, and with the advent of new processing and packaging technologies to improve the shelf life of ready-to-eat/ cook products, alongside a growth in storage and distribution centres and lifestyle changes, the segment gained momentum. However, people are still under the impression that processed foods contain harmful additives and preservatives or that the product is adulterated. This is still the mindset that people need to overcome before ready-to-eat or heat-n-serve foods grow to their true potential. For example, noodle is still accepted to a large extent since the cooking is done at home and partially qualifies as “home-made”, mostly by including vegetables, etc., at the time of cooking.



**The ready-to-eat category was commercially first introduced to the country in 1987, but suffered a slow beginning with consumers preferring traditional cooking.**



So, if noodles can grow to such a large extent that every household has at least one packet stored in the pantry, then it is not long before the ready-to-eat products reach that level.

**Market size**

Already, ready to eat/cook products have come a long way in the past few years. According to market research agency Euromonitor, the Packaged foods market will continue to achieve

a double digit growth during 2017-2022, mainly due to the need and dependence on packaged food, coupled by convenience and availability. Essential commodities like edible oils, dairy, rice, bread and breakfast cereals are an integral part of the daily diet and these will contribute to a constant rising demand. "RTE/ RTC products like biscuits, savory snacks, confectionery, spreads, soups, noodles, pasta and ice creams will remain the most dynamic categories in packaged foods to perform well during 2017-2022."

According to industry estimates, the RTE and RTC convenience food category size is worth over Rs. 1,000 crore and growing at around 15 per cent y-o-y. According to data research company Nielsen, the breakfast mixes market is growing at 17% and is currently pegged at INR 275 crore and set to grow at a faster clip in the years ahead. However, as fancy as the various breakfast cereals available in the market might be, we crave the satisfaction that only a traditional dish can give. And hence traditional brands are coming up with options that are suitable for the Indian palate. The traditional brands such as ITC and MTR have forayed into items such as bhel bar, pot upma, poha, which can be had on the go, anytime, anywhere.

Consumers today are willing to try different types of foods, but are time crunched. They seek convenience in everything including the foods they need to prepare/eat. This has resulted in brands across RTE/ RTC/ RTD portfolios increase their

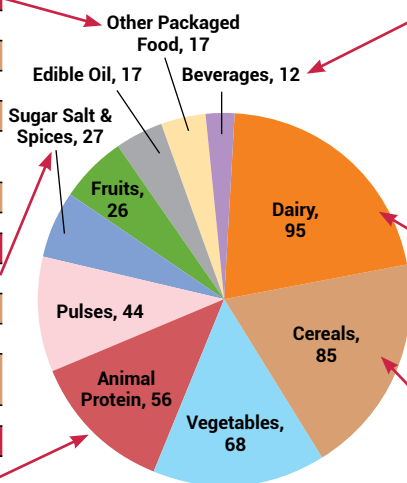


**MAJOR FOOD SEGMENTS IN INDIA**

Item	USD BN	CAGR 2020
Savoury snacks	5	30%
Biscuits	4	20%
Confectioneries	3	18%
Baked Goods	2	10%
Pasta, Noodles & Soup	1	9%
Others	2	18%

Item	USD BN	CAGR 2020
Sugar	14	2%
Salt	1	2%
Spices	10	17%
Pickles/ ingredients	2	20%

Item	USD BN	CAGR 2020
Fish and Seafood	10	10%
Chicken	12	12%
Mutton	10	12%
Beef and Veal	7	10%
Eggs	5	13%
Pork	3	15%



Item	USD BN	CAGR 2020
Carbonates	4.3	8%
Tea	2.5	4%
Bottled Water	2.2	16%
Juices & Concentrates	2	10%
Coffee	1	10%

Item	USD BN	CAGR 2020
Liquid Milk	44	15%
Ghee	22	14%
Others	29	14%

Item	USD BN	CAGR 2020
Rice	42	2%
Wheat Products	21	6%
Others	21	4%

Source: News Articles, EMIS, Dun & Bradstreet, Industry Reports, Deloitte Analysis; Value in \$ billion for FY17

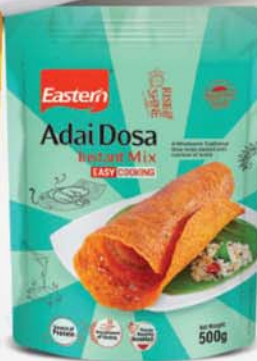




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## RETORTING TECHNOLOGY HAS GALVANIZED THE MARKET FOR READY-TO-EAT/ COOK FOOD

RTE/ RTC food products now use the retort processed technology where foods that don't need rehydration or preparation and may be consumed straight from the pouch or packet, with or without pre-warming, relying upon the necessity of the users and the weather. These foods meet the particular wants of convenience, organic process adequacy, ambient storage and distribution to the centers. Shelf stability has made this extremely successful and most suited to Indian cuisines. Hence, a number of tasty Indian dishes in retort pouches enable consumers to enjoy their favorite foods such as sooji halwa, upma, chicken curry etc. "The use of retorting technology has thus made the sale of ready-to-eat/ cook foodstuff commercially viable, and in vogue with contemporary food styles," says **P. Rajan Mathews**, a F&B Business Leader.

The pioneer in the development of RTE in India has been the Defence Food Research Laboratory (DFRL), Mysore, which was established on 28th December 1961 to fulfill the needs of varied foods for Indian Army, Navy, Air force and paramilitary forces. Using the self-developed technologies, DFRL has produced many ready-to-eat, quick-to-cook instant foods with a longer shelf life.

Some of them are long keeping chappaties (shelf life 6 months), high protein snacks (shelf life 9 months), spiced potato parathas (6 months), fruit bars (9 months), mutton pickle (6 months), stabilized chikki (1 year). Today, retort processing is the most acceptable form of food preservation. These are ready to eat food products that require



just warming in a microwave oven or water bath before eating. Packaging of this food should withstand thermal processing. Retort pouch is the flexible, laminated food package, which is light on weight. It maintains the shelf-life, texture and nutritive value of frozen food. During war, soldiers can easily carry these packages. So they are very popular. "The selection of packing material of retort pouches is very important. It should have a high melting point, physical strength, protect against light degradation, moisture changes, microbial invasion and oxygen ingress. It should resist penetration of fats, oils and other food components. Packing material should not contaminate the food inside," says Mathews.

Japan and European countries use multi-layer polyester with 7-20 microns thickness aluminium foil and 75 microns thickness polypropylene for retort pouches. But they are very expensive for our country. DFRL, by its research, tried polypropylene (PP) and co-extruded material of polypropylenenylon-polypropylene (PP-Nylon-PP). This is now successfully used in the packaging of meat, vegetable curries, rice with meat and vegetables, sweet halwa, beans in sauce, etc.

assortment depth and also substantially improve their quality and availability. For instance, today the frozen ready-to-cook food products are manufactured under extremely hygienic conditions and with the best in class recipes to give consumers the authentic taste experience. Optimistic about the future of this category, several brands are positioning themselves to lead the growth story in the coming years.

One factor driving this growth story is that Indian consumers are increasingly developing an appetite for eating out or ordering takeaway food. This is because their disposable income is increasing even as the inclination to prepare food at home is growing less strong due to the lack of time in the hands of the working population. "Domestic helps are difficult to find and chores like cooking and cleaning are no longer DIY (do-it-yourself) jobs. Younger couples are therefore opting for these products because of their hectic lifestyles where the woman of the house has less time for cooking and therefore relies on RTC and RTE meals. These products also solve the weekend crises faced by consumers where they start looking for 'easy-to-cook recipe solutions'. The quickest of restaurant deliveries cannot match the quick preparation of RTE products," says **Sahil Gilani**, Director, Sales and Marketing, Gits Food Products Pvt Ltd.

Another noticeable factor spurring the demand for RTE/ RTC food is the exponential growth of start-ups riding







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### MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT RTE/ RTC

- The most surprising misconception about RTE is that the Indian consumer is not prepared for the product and hence most of the sales have been in the export market.
- The housewife, till date, was not willing to accept a completely prepared product to feed the family due to apprehensions of it reducing her role as the family's provider.
- RTE/ RTC foods contain preservatives.
- Not nutritional in comparison to fresh food.
- RTE/ RTC do not offer enough value for money.
- Most RTE/ RTC is routine food such as dal, sambhar, palak, etc, and is not a novelty. And the novelty products introduced by some brands are priced very high.
- Availability is limited majorly to modern format stores.
- The penetration of RTE/ RTC till date has been very low in general grocery stores and households.

### SOCIAL CHANGES DRIVING RTE/ RTC TREND

- The RTE/ RTC food category has a tremendous growth opportunity in the near future due to:
- Growth in the number of nuclear families: Census 2011 figures states that India is now overwhelmingly made up of nuclear families — a dramatic change from just a generation ago, where joint families were the norm. Seventy per cent of the households consist of only one couple.
- Increase in urbanization.
- There is an increase in the population of Indian women, who have neither the time nor the knowledge to cook traditional meals on a regular basis.
- Indians have become more experimental with their food and drink choices, as there is a need for variety.
- Growing youth population.
- Significant rise in the number of working women – 34% households have working women; 49 lakh households in the top 10 cities constitute 50% of the total working women.
- Growing practice of singles living away from home for education or work.
- Change in Mindset: From a mindset, where home-cooked and fresh food was preferred, and housewives insisted on making everything from snacks to multi-course meals in-house, today it has become commonplace to seek convenience and variety, using the vast menu of ready-to-eat foods available.
- Food as convenience and novelty: The variety of ready to cook and ready to eat food is growing, thus helping the housewife in her quest for novelty.



the technology wave in the foodservice sector. Be it international cuisines or just home-cooked meals, there is a growing number of start-ups offering prepared meals to the urban population. On the retail front, with the rise in urban population and changing food habits, demand for processed food is on the rise. With every passing year, more women are getting into occupations, which is making them more independent and on the other hand leaving them with little time to spend in kitchen to prepare something for themselves or their family.

Talking of new brands and start-ups entering the RTE/RTC category, not only are they innovative, they also aspire to change the perception of the category. “Brands like Chevon with their high- protein goat meat assortment like Mumbai baida roti, mutton nuggets , mutton samosas, etc, have not only become popular among loyal category consumers but also bringing new recruitment to the category. Similarly, the Fries segment has also seen value addition with brands like Sumeru innovating in the segment with flavored spice mixes of piri-piri, chilli garlic and surprising chicken masala and healthy paratha range like turmeric/beetroot/spinach paratha other than the conventional paratha range, which too have become very popular among young consumers,” says **Shankar R Nair**, National Category Lead, FMCG Foods at Future Group India (small formats).

Today, purchasing raw chicken from the street side butcher shop, cleaning and sizing it is probably one of the most onerous tasks any homemaker faces. Hence her dependency on branded, packaged chicken is rising steadily to fulfill the family's protein requirement.

Even in the coastal areas, despite the availability of fresh fish, frozen shrimp or fish is purchased to avoid the hassle of cutting and cleaning the seafood. The same is true of vegetables





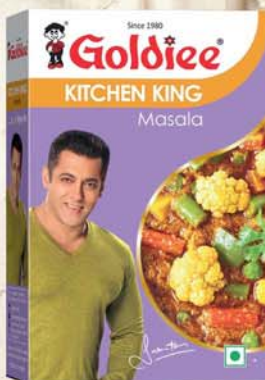
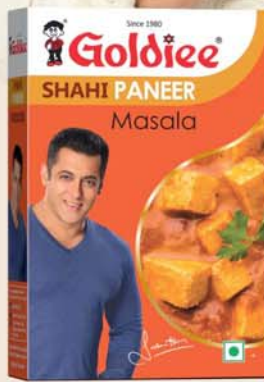
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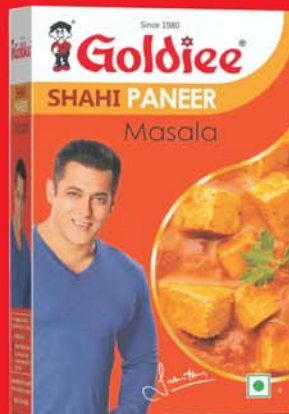
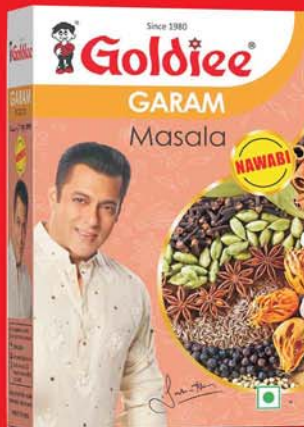
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and meat as well. This trend in favor of RTE/RTC is further spurred by the growth in retail markets. India is expected to be the fifth-largest retail market by 2025.

**Consumer segments, trends and challenges**

Nuclear families and bachelors residing in the metros for study or employment are among the major consumers of RTE food products in India. The number of working women is particularly on the rise, which is again driving the demand. All these factors are creating significant awareness about ready meals among consumers. And although gaining momentum with working professionals, RTE/RTC foods are now being increasingly targeted at housewives and households.

The trend in the RTE/ RTC segment is for wholesome products with natural, premium ingredients and no food additives. Good quality, wholesome and nutritious RTE/RTD foods are required to ensure that the consumer's health is protected whilst providing an enjoyable eating and snacking option. The Indian cooking styles have undergone considerable changes over the past few years owing to the advent of modern technology and several other changes such as urbanization, increasing working population, increase in female work population and the rise of nuclear families. People have been increasingly shifting to ready-to-eat food items in order to save the time involved in preparing meals. With the growing media awareness, literacy rates and standard of living, people have grown more responsive towards the health and hygiene standards associated with food products.

With rising awareness about health and hygiene, increasing numbers of consumers also realize that majorly RTE/ RTC foods are loaded with preservatives for a longer shelf life. It is a major concern that can hinder the growth of this market and become a cause for disenchantment, particularly in the young generation, which has a heightened health consciousness. Another factor is the price sensitiveness among a large Indian population and the fact that good quality RTE/ RTC food is affordable only to select classes of the society. Hence it becomes all the more essential for new players in this field to make their products affordable for the masses and to marry convenience with health benefits to ensure convenience food does not compromise on quality. The key is to provide RTE food options focused on Indian taste for everyday and affordable consumption, which are not harmful in the long run.

In today's modern age, we see an influx of processed and unhealthy items in the snacks market. While these unhealthy options are relatively



cheap and easily accessible, healthier options are becoming more limited and increasingly expensive. For a working professional occupied in a day job, lunch is often not at home and one feels the need for a light snack at around 5-6 in the evening. RTE/RTC manufacturers should look at giving customers a portable but wholesome product consisting of beneficial ingredients that isn't too heavy on the pocket. Most people are of the opinion that healthy food can't be tasty and delicious but companies need to strike a golden balance between taste and health with the use of popular flavors.

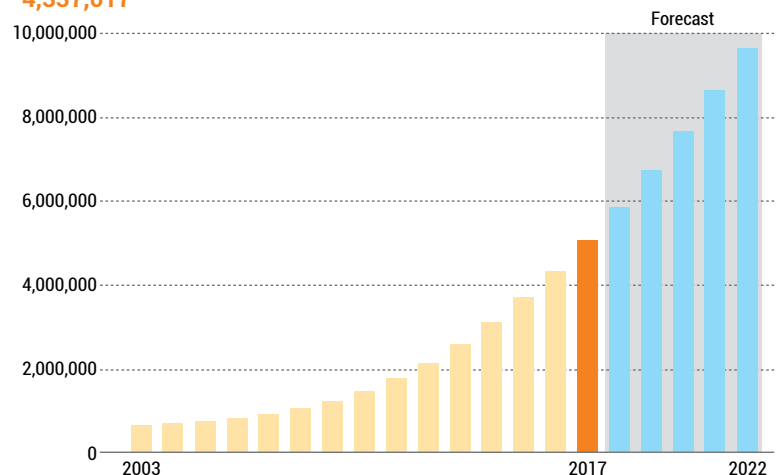
This is the challenge taken up specifically by

**In today's fast-paced lifestyle, time is valuable and the ease of preparation and convenience has improved the sales of ready-to-eat/ cook products to a large extent.**

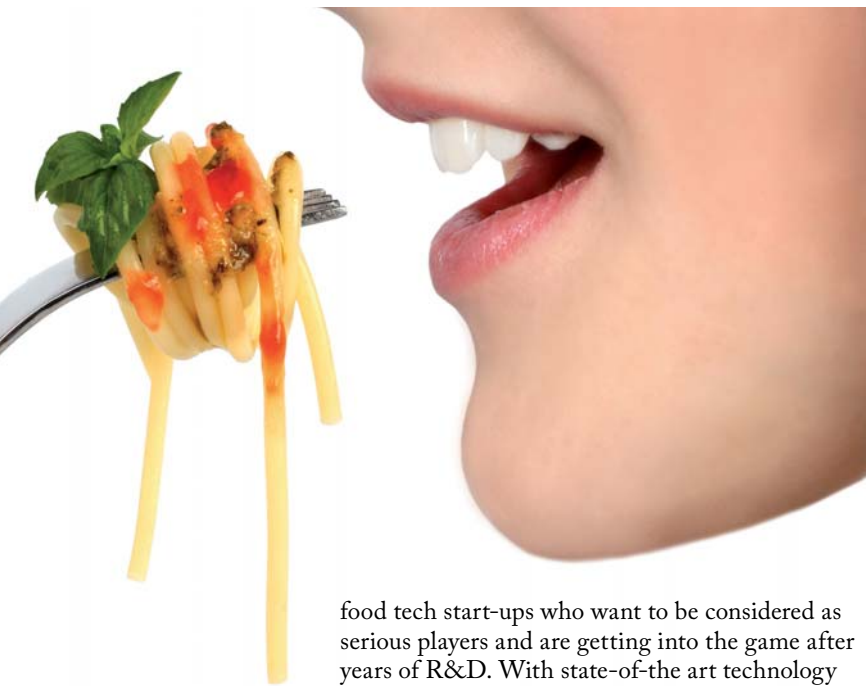
**RETAIL VALUE SALES OF THE ENTIRE PACKAGED FOODS SECTOR – HISTORIC TILL 2017**

Sales of Packaged Food in India  
Retail Value RSP - INR million - Current 2003-2022

**4,337,017**



© Euromonitor International



food tech start-ups who want to be considered as serious players and are getting into the game after years of R&D. With state-of-the art technology in packaging and processing to ensure the end product is not just a world class product that can eventually be on the shelves in countries across the globe, but also product that is a strong contender for being a game-changer in the market.

Also, in response to the growing consumer trend in favor of healthy and nutritious products, major brands are coming forward to offer products

**Consumers are drifting from openly or loosely sold food products to the consumption of hygienically packaged fortified RTE foods.**

CAGR PERCENTAGE GROWTH OF VARIOUS PACKAGED FOOD CATEGORIES IN INDIA THROUGH 2012-2017	
Category	2012 - 2017 CAGR %
Edible Oils	25.7
Breakfast Cereals	21.4
Spreads	21.1
Savoury Snacks	20.9
Rice, Pasta and Noodles	18.8
Ready Meals	18.5
Sauces, Dressings and Condiments	18.5
Processed Meat and Seafood	17.8
Confectionery	17.6
Ice Cream and Frozen Desserts	17.2
Soup	17.1
Baby Food	16.7
Processed Fruit and Vegetables	16.7
Dairy	16.2
Sweet Biscuits, Snack Bars and Fruit Snacks	11.9
Baked Goods	10.4

Source: Euromonitor

that do not use any added flavors, additives or preservatives. This is surely a positive way of ensuring that the food under the RTE/RTC label is as close to home-made as possible. With consumers moving towards freshness and healthy eating, ready-to-eat/ cook food producers are doing their best to integrate these two concepts. The key is to offer hygienic, healthy and affordable, but quality food minus the trouble of cooking.

Since these products are now being made with zero additives, they can be safely served to even children without worrying about added chemicals. However, it will take some time to reach the kids and housewives section since they have to be made aware of the products in the market and its value. However, with the introduction of new ready-to-cook, ready to fry and heat-n-serve products, brands are seeing a drastic pick up of sales in the college and large office segments. People in these segments do not have much time to cook or shop, and that's where these product lines are picking up.

The one thing about people in general is that they get bored easily, be it in the things they do or the things they eat. So, once every few months, RTE/RTC brands and manufacturers need to step up on the game and bring products that will not only intrigue the masses into trying them but also make them tasty enough to want for more. The trick lies in introducing completely new product categories that will make them stand out from the competitors when such products come in on the market. So, brands should strive to expand their SKU range and also introduce new flavors and variants. This will give customers a variety in choices. And once the new products are able to establish themselves in the market, it's back to the kitchen for brands and time to make something new.

Modern trade continues to play an important role in ensuring the availability of ready to cook/ eat food products to consumers. Modern stores, outlets at cinemas, and airports are a good source of premium RTE/RTD foods as they are able to provide adequate space and visibility to such products. Traditional grocery stores also sell these, but often they do not stock the premium brands. Sometimes, traditional stores do not have the handling capability for such foods nor do they attract the premium customers.

Growth in retail chains and outlets is also adding to the product awareness among consumers in the country. Supermarkets, convenience stores and hypermarkets are emerging as the key points-of-sale for offering a wide range RTE/ RTC food products. For leading brands in this category, it is therefore important to understand that they need to be constructive towards the category and play



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Type of Outlets	%
Chemist	0%
Grocers	39%
Pan Plus	1%
Food Stores	10%
Modern Format Stores	51%

Total Number of Outlets for RTE	28561	(Source: Nielsen Data)
% Penetration of RTE Category in 'A' Category Outlets	13%	(Assumption: Universe of Outlets is 2,22,330)
% Penetration of RTE in Sec A1, A2 Households per month	2%	(Source: IRS Data for A1, A2 households townwise)

**About 79 per cent of Indian households today prefer to have instant food due to time constraints. With two working parents and families becoming nuclear, people prefer authentic, nutritious store-bought options rather than spending hours in the kitchen after work.**



the role of a true category partner with modern store retailers. Having an intimate working relationship with modern trade retailers will help brands in ensuring a consistent availability of their products and SKUs across the outlets and build a stronger category.

### Road Ahead

A recent survey done by ASSOCHAM (Associated Chamber of Commerce and Industry of India) says about 79 per cent of Indian households today prefer to have instant food due to time constraints. With two working parents and families becoming nuclear, people prefer authentic, nutritious store-bought options rather than spending hours in the kitchen after work. In recent years, the focus of the ready-to-eat market has gradually shifted from just homemakers or students to young professionals and families.

It is found that 76 per cent of parents in big cities, mostly both working with children under the age of five, are serving easy-to-make meals in some form or the other, at least 10-12 times every month! No wonder that the RTE market continues to expand at a brisk pace. To fulfill the demand of this large section of consumers, one will find a lot of new RTE brands in the market. Unlike the giant brands though, the new entrants are trying to create a niche category for themselves, be it breakfast cereals, canned, frozen foods, spreads, chutneys, and so on.

Companies will look to attract consumers within areas like olive oil, spreads and ready meals by offering promotions, new product developments, health & nutritional benefits and attractive packaging. The Indian consumer behavior has been influenced by exposure to other cultures primarily in the West through travels, and popular literature. The ready-to-eat market is somewhat saturated in the West, hence developing countries like India are attracting the majority of big players with the promise of a high growth opportunity. The booming food sector, multiple food outlets, the popularity of international brands and distinctive distribution channels adopted by players are expected to help the market grow at a continuous pace.

The food industry is a large space and interesting space where consumers are aware, care for health, nutrition and want products of international standards. Brands that are looking to carving out a place for themselves in the RTE/ RTC segment should constantly work on developing products without compromising on the nutrition content, even while keeping the focus on convenience.

The growth in the working woman segment, increasing work and study commitments, declining culinary skills, the rising need for convenience, and surging disposable incomes, along with clever and innovative marketing, will continue to lead to a higher demand for RTE/ RTC products. Still, the ready to eat/ cook food category in India has a long way to go as brands strive to deliver on the promise that the homemaker doesn't have to compromise on nutrition and health in the name of convenience. **PG**

**In the pages to follow, we bring you the profiles of some cutting-edge brands in the Ready-to-Eat & Ready-to-Cook category and what they are doing to offer high value, branded products that deliver convenient solutions to consumers.**



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# Make traditional, healthy dishes with Eastern Condiments

**→ Company and brand profile:** Eastern Condiments Private Limited, incorporated in 1989, is the flagship brand of the Eastern Group, set up as a trading company in 1968. The group has today has a turnover of over Rs. 900 crore and employs about 4,000 people. Eastern Condiments is involved in the manufacture and marketing of ready-to-use spices and masala blends, ready-to-eat and ready-to-cook items like breakfast mixes, apart from other products like rice powders, coffee, tea, pickles, etc.

The condiments business of Eastern has a global presence, and its growth in the international market continues to soar. Eastern Condiments has carved a niche for itself in the Middle East regional market, where it exports a range of spice

mixes for some of the signature Middle Eastern dishes. Apart from its presence in the Middle East market, Eastern Condiments also exports its products to the US, UK, Canada, Europe, Singapore, Malaysia, Maldives, Yemen, and Australia.

Eastern Condiments has also established its brand leadership with the Indian and local community as well. The company has a 70% market share of the organized spice segment in Kerala and has a sizable footprint across India in States like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana.

Eastern Condiments has won awards as India's largest spice exporter by the Spices Board of India for the last 18 years in a row. The company has a strategic alignment with the US spices giant McCormick.

refresh your childhood memories. Eastern's new RTC range is 100% free from trans-fat, and offers a ready solution by bridging the gap for healthy eating and cooking traditional cuisines of India. The products are absolutely natural, and without any preservatives or artificial colors.

Eastern's strategic partnership with McCormick has helped the brand implement quality processes that are world class and future-oriented in terms of innovation. All products are developed after extensive research on regional flavors and manufactured and packed strictly adhering to good manufacturing practices.

### Marketing and branding strategy:

Compared to other brands in the same space, Eastern's strategy is to keep the marketing spends low. Instead, the brand's focus is more on areas like innovation and product quality. However, the brand is actively engaged in its umbrella branding through online, which is a space it has consistently focused on and will continue to build on it.

**Retailing strategy:** As part of its retailing focus, Eastern products are distributed to the retailer every single week throughout the year within a specified time frame. This has an impact in multiple ways.

First, fresh products are delivered. Second, the retailer only gets what he/she needs. The company doesn't force any retailer to stock large quantities of its products. The retailer has the full freedom to buy products according to his/her needs. This avoids forced stockpiling, which is a concern in the FMCG space but is often done to meet sales targets.

“



**We have created an efficient supply chain from farm to fork in a scalable, sustainable and socially responsible way, which has assured us leadership in terms of the quality of products.**

— Firoz Meeran  
Managing Director, Eastern Condiments

**Products in the RTC range:** Eastern products for the Indian market include a range of instant breakfast mixes – Ragi Idli, Ragi Dosa, Rava Dosa, Rava Idli, Adai Dosa, Poha, and Pongal. The brand's other products in the RTC range are: Butter Chicken Masala; Dal Makhani; Shahi Paneer; Palak Paneer; Veg Kadai; and Methi Mutter Malai.

**Brand's USP and differentiator:** Eastern ready-to-cook gravies offer the perfect solution to time-pressed consumers. Each pack of Eastern gives you a delightful dish in just three easy steps. You never again have to keep your guests waiting at the dinner table as sumptuous restaurant style meals are served in a matter of minutes. Moreover, the authentic flavors of Indian gravies are sure to mesmerize you and





## Nutrezy nutrition bars for healthy on-the-go snacking

### → Company and brand profile:

Karmasukom Edibles operates healthy snack brand Nutrezy, which was founded in 2015 by a mother-daughter duo who share a passion for healthy living and promoting a healthy lifestyle. The brand started its journey with e-commerce and is now slowly venturing into retail on the back of its R&D and product development strength. The company's mission is to provide healthy products to the ever evolving consumers and is engaged in providing them with wholesome nutrition on-the-go through its nutrition bars.

**Product portfolio:** Nutrezy began with Nutrition Bars made up of wholesome ingredients, derived from various nuts and seeds that are low in calorie and rich in taste. Currently, it manufactures three variants of Nutrition Bar: Almond Cranberry Crunch Bar, which is a low-gluten snack bar and whose taste matches the nutty palate; Blueberry Granola Bar, which is a fantastic berry-delicious protein bar for all the granola lovers; Cocoa & Dates Bar, a perfect go-to snack, high in energy and rich in taste.

**Best-selling product:** The blueberry granola peanut butter bar is Nutrezy's best-selling product and has also been featured as the Amazon's choice product. This bar is made up of peanut butter, blueberries and pumpkin seeds as its major ingredients. It is loved by children and adults alike and it provides 20% protein per variant, which is derived from the nuts and seeds present in the bar. Also, there is no added sugar in the bars, which are made up of honey and palm jaggery.

**Key markets:** Nutrezy bars cater to children and adults alike. Hence, the products have a presence across various markets and are popular with schools, fitness centres, vending machines, corporate offices, supermarkets and online subscription box models and various other healthy snacking online portals.

“



**You are what you eat! At Nutrezy, what you see (on the wrapper) is what you get to eat. We believe that healthy food plays a critical role for good human health. It is a common misconception that healthy and tasty don't go hand in hand. We strive to make our healthy products as tasty and fresh as they can be. Our regular customers always highlight the fact that every bite of our nutrition bar is as tasty and fresh as just out of the kitchen!**

– Sukesha Mahesh Kadaba and  
Komal Mahesh Kadaba  
Co-founders, Karmasukom Edibles  
(Brand- Nutrezy)

### Brand USP and differentiator:

Nutrezy products are made up of natural ingredients. The products are wholesome, full of nuts, seeds and dry fruits, with no added preservatives and sugar. Also, they come with a shelf-life of 9 months and retain the freshness all through their shelf life.

### Market outlook and opportunity:

The ready to eat healthy food segment in India is very nascent and is only about a little more than a decade old. The company believes that the market awareness for healthy food consumption is increasing gradually and people are moving more towards consuming healthy products. This, coupled with the busy life-style, makes nutrition bars and other ready to eat healthy solutions a most sought after category in the market. As there is a lot more to explore in the healthy snack market with a need for continuous innovation, there is opportunity for players like Nutrezy to enter and play this market.

The festive season is a good period for sales and Nutrezy sees sales of its products pick up visibly on occasions such as Rakshabandhan, Ganesh Chaturthi, Diwali and Christmas. This trend is owing to the fact that consumers are slowly shifting their gifting and consumption preferences from the conventional sugar-loaded Indian sweets to healthy snacks. Nutrezy also brings out customized hampers for the festive season, which are preferred by customers as a gifting option.



## Slurrp Farm caters to health-conscious parents and kids

➔ **Company and brand profile:** Slurrp Farm was officially launched in 2016 as a health and organic Indian food company with a mission to provide healthy snacks and mealtime options for young children and their parents. It started operations by offering millet-based cereals and cookies, pancake, dosa mix, and puffs/ munchies products. The company wants to be an Indian brand, which brings the tremendous force of traditional ingredients like millets, used by our grandmothers, to the rest of the world. It believes that the comeback of millets is especially important in countries like India where they can aid in feeding an ever-growing population and address the concerns of malnutrition, recurrent drought, and sustainable food traditions.

**Product portfolio:** Currently, Slurrp Farm sells 11 products, all in the kids' category. The offerings include a range of nutritious and delectable products – cookies (oats, honey & banana; ragi & chocolate) made with real butter and no trans-fat; millet dosa mixes (spinach; beetroot) and millet pancake mixes (chocolate & supergrains; banana, choco chip) with no maida; scrunchy-munchy snack packs (three exciting flavors in puffs – mighty puffs & snack packs); cereals for toddlers made with organic ingredients – ragi rice with mango and amp; milk; ragi

rice with strawberry and milk; ragi rice with banana and milk).

**Key markets and customer segments:** Slurrp Farm buyers are parents living in the metros and other cities. These consumers look for hassle-free, healthy and nutritious food products for their children but are often faced with poor alternatives. That is because though products are easily available and affordable in this category, they also come with harmful ingredients such as refined flours, trans-fat, excessive salt and sugar, colors and preservatives.

**Brand USP and differentiator:** The company uses traditional Indian supergrains and ingredients like millets and lentils with zero trans-fat, less sugar than other brands and little to no maida and preservatives, which make its product offerings healthy, tasty and fun to eat.

**Growth rate of products and growth drivers:** Slurrp Farm sales are slated to grow 5x this year. As a young company, sales have been growing 40% every quarter since its launch in 2016. The company expects a 30-45% additional jump in sales, varying from city to city, during this festive season.

The rise of the health-conscious consumer and the brand's way of communicating health to them has been responsible for the company's impressive sales growth. This, coupled with the idea of being 'digital first', has further facilitated the growth of the brand and its products. E-commerce made it possible for Slurrp Farm to reach its consumers across the country from Day One.

**Retail reach and strategy:** Slurrp Farm's retail strategy is very clear – it is reaching out to the top 10% of self-service stores that contribute 50% of sales in their channels. The brand is only looking at A+ counters, as it feels that its target customer shops there. The brand's products are sold both through online and offline retail platforms. Offline, the products are currently available at 800 stores across eight cities in India. Its top retailers include some of the leading retail



**All our products are a perfect combination of health meeting taste and convenience. Made with wholesome natural ingredients from a mother's kitchen, our ragi-based munchies and snacks are fun to eat and beat the hunger pangs with their amazing flavors.**

– Shauravi Malik and Meghana Narayan  
Co-founders, Slurrp Farms

formats in key metros and Tier-II cities like Modern Bazaar, Le Marche, Krishna Supermarche 37, Foodhall, Organic World (Bangalore), Browntree (Chennai), Needs (Gurgaon) and many other local players.

The products are also available across several leading online platforms, including Amazon, BigBasket, FirstCry, BabyChakra, and Slurrp Farm products enjoy a 40% repeat rate on Amazon. In mid-2019, Slurrp Farm started D2C operations through its own website, which has enabled it to communicate more actively with the end consumer.

**Future plans and road ahead:** Over the next 10 years, Slurrp Farm hopes to drive its product category to reach an inflection point, thus bringing about a real change in the healthy (and yummy!) food market. The brand's aim is to be available on every retail shelf and in millions of kitchens, homes, and hearts across the country.

The brand has also launched the products in seven Emirates of the UAE (available through leading online platforms such as Mumsworld and aFirstCry + 7 retail outlets) and is in talks to launch the brand in the UK and Nordic countries.







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## BD Agro Foods' products are market winners across India

➔ **Company and brand profile:** BD Agro Foods, which began its corporate journey 65 years ago, is a pioneer in introducing frozen products. The company enjoys vast experience in the field of production, storage, marketing of a wide range of products in the category. The company has attained many global standards for food safety certifications – an extensive range, excellence in quality and delivery, and prompt after-sales service.



**Product portfolio:** The company is known for its wide range of RTE/ RTC products such as frozen matar paneer; frozen dal makhani; frozen sarso ka saag; frozen kesar rasmalai; frozen kheer; frozen gulab jamun; frozen masala corn; aloo paratha; Punjabi samosa; Malabari paratha; crispy happy potatoes; aloo tikki; veg. pizza pocket; cheese corn nuggets; veg. masala nuggets; hariyali bites; frozen litchis; frozen whole strawberries; ginger, garlic and onion paste; tomato paste and puree; green chilly paste and puree; frozen green chilly cubes; red chilly paste and puree; frozen French cut beans; canned French cut beans; frozen English dice carrots; canned English dice carrots; frozen French fries; and frozen green peas.

**Brand USP and differentiator:** BD Agro works closely with producers who stick to strong quality consciousness and high consumer demands. It understands the high standards of customers and their expectations and is always ready to innovate.

“



**BD Agro Foods is a major supplier of processed food products in India and worldwide. With a wide range of frozen food products in our portfolio, we have further expanded into ketchup, paste, purees along with developing the prowess in controlled atmospheric cold storage.**

– Puneet Gupta  
Director Marketing, BD Agro Foods

## Clucky's fresh and healthy chicken at affordable prices

➔ **Company and brand profile:** Clucky's Chicken is a young company, which produces, packages and brings the freshest and cleanest chicken to you. At Clucky's, the chicks are grown by contract farmers (the company supports the farming community) using the best farming practices, which are closely monitored by the company vets.

Clucky's processing centre collects the birds from the farms on a daily basis. The birds are collected in special coups, and in limited numbers to keep them clean and comfortable. The processing centre follows all the standards of Animal Welfare and Food Safety. The processing plant is also certified to ISO 22000 (Food Safety), HALAL and FSSAI Standards.

**Product range:** Clucky's Chicken has more than 10+ variants available to suit any cooking need.

**Brand USP and differentiator:** Clucky's chicken are anti-biotic free, steroid free,

“

**In today's world of concerns over food safety, animal welfare, environment and sustainability, we are committed to produce only good quality chicken by keeping the health factors in mind during the entire process of farm to fork.**

– Neel Bahl  
Founder and Director  
Clucky's Chicken

growth-hormone free and come with the most hygienic packaging.

At the company's processing centre, each piece of chicken is hand trimmed to remove any excessive fats and each piece is inspected before packing. Using MAP technology, the product is packed in trays and sealed to make an air-tight packing. This technology allows the product to stay fresh under chilled conditions (0 degree to 4 degree) for seven days (without the use of any chemicals and preservatives).

Retail reach: You can order Clucky's chicken online from Amazon Prime Now App or from select supermarkets across Mumbai. It also offers bulk buying facility for retail stores and supermarkets.



**Customer connect:** To know more about Clucky's Chicken, contact via e-mail: [info@cluckys.co](mailto:info@cluckys.co) or visit the company website [cluckys.co](http://cluckys.co) Follow them on Facebook: @cluckysfreshchicken, Instagram: @cluckysfreshchicken



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# Becoming a Health Destination

A few points show retailers how to better connect with wellness-minded shoppers.

By Karen Buch

Effective wellness solutions need to be simple, relevant, personalized and affordable for consumers.

**H**ow can grocery retailers develop comprehensive, consumer-driven approaches to health and wellness? Provide consumers with access to healthful foods and health education while helping to ease some of the common barriers to healthier living. Effective wellness solutions need to be simple, relevant, personalized and affordable for consumers.

## Make it Easy

Consumers want to meet all of their health-and-wellness needs in a single destination. That means convenience, coupled with a sufficient variety of core, niche and cutting-edge products. Savvy retailers anticipate health-conscious shoppers' needs and offer solutions-based in-store merchandising, adjacencies and complementary online shopping experiences.

## Clarity Counts

Shoppers struggle to simplify the shopping process for themselves and their families. More than half of consumers claim to be following a special diet that limits or restricts certain ingredients or certain food production methods. Be transparent and help provide answers to key consumer concerns,

including where food comes from, the nature of ingredients, and how food is produced.

## Keep Things Relevant

As a point of differentiation, retailers should look beyond the path to purchase and focus instead on the path to healthy consumption by providing meal solutions that fit a healthy lifestyle. Showcase an authentic commitment to wellness via weekly circulars, store displays, healthy recipe ideas and prepared food offerings, better-for-you own-brand products and in-store samplings, and overarching messaging.

## Personalized Experience

Tap into shopper data and tech engagement to target the right shopper with the right product at the right time. Speak directly to key motivators by communicating how consumers can feel better, be happier, live longer and look better. Be active in social channels where you can listen to your existing customers and encourage two-way interaction and dialogue.

## Affordable Products and Services

Retailers can shape their pricing strategies to make the healthier choice the high-value yet affordable choice. In addition, use loyalty programs and electronic savings programs to develop incentives that reward shoppers for making healthier choices.

## Be an Ally

Today, 75 percent of all households report that at least one member has a chronic medical condition, and this number is only expected to grow. Leading wellness destinations will be allies, helping individuals to close the gap between their good intentions for diet and lifestyle and their actual choices, behaviors and purchases. **PG**

Karen Buch RDN, LDN, is a registered dietitian/nutritionist who specializes in retail dietetics and food and culinary nutrition communications. One of the first supermarket dietitians, she is now founder and principal consultant at Nutrition Connections LLC, providing consulting services nationwide. You can connect with her on twitter @karenbuch and at NutritionConnectionsLLC.com.







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# Challenges in addressing the problem of food allergens

Food allergens management is becoming very important in the food industry globally. Several national regulations are addressing the allergen management by putting regulations in place for food manufacturers. But the confusion between food allergies and food intolerances and also a lack of awareness on the type of allergies that a consumer experiences, creates challenges in addressing the problem.

By **Dr. K.V. Satyanarayana**

**T**here has been significant increase in food allergy incidents in the past few decades and food allergies are becoming an important public health concern and a major food safety issue globally. Public health systems, food safety authorities and the food industry can play a key role in helping individuals with certain food allergies avoid exposure to such food. Recognizing a true food allergy that a consumer is experiencing is critical to recommending avoidance of a particular food, since some individuals have very low threshold levels for these foods.

## **Adverse food reactions**

Adverse food reactions can be defined as any abnormal reaction caused by the ingestion of food. Adverse reactions to foods can be broadly divided into immune (IgE) mediated food allergies or non-immune (non-IgE) mediated food intolerances. Food allergies and food intolerances are different from other food-borne diseases caused by foodborne pathogens that cause illness in humans by either infection or intoxication. Food-borne infections are caused by consuming live pathogens like bacteria, molds, viruses, and parasites that grow in the body, usually in the intestinal tract,



and cause illness. Food-borne intoxications are caused by consuming toxins produced by certain bacteria like *Staphylococcus aureus* after they have grown in the food and ingestion of chemical substances like aflatoxins produced by certain molds. Food-borne infections and intoxications can affect all the individuals who consume the contaminated food, but the degree of susceptibility may vary between individuals. In contrast to food-borne infections and intoxications, food allergies and food intolerances cause adverse reactions in only certain individuals in the population and the majority of the population can consume that food without any adverse reactions. A classification scheme for different types of adverse reactions to foods is provided in Figure 1 on page 62.

### Food allergy vs food intolerance

Food allergy is defined as “an adverse health effect arising from a specific immune response that occurs reproducibly on exposure to a given food, usually a naturally occurring protein”.

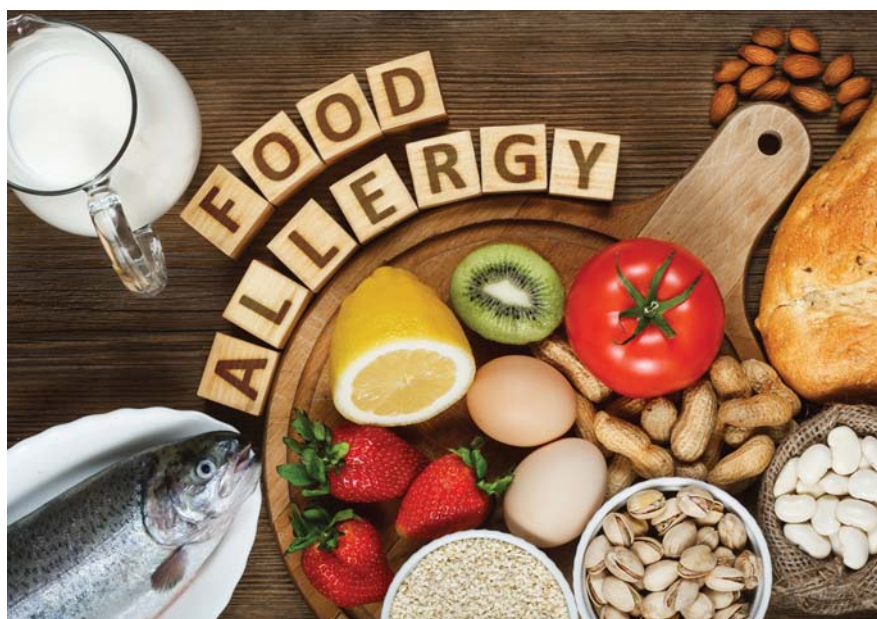
Depending on the involvement of antibody called immunoglobulin E (IgE), the immune response in food allergy can be classified into IgE-mediated, non-IgE-mediated or a mixture of both (Figure 1). In IgE-mediated response, symptoms of food allergy usually start within minutes of exposure (immediate hypersensitivity reactions) to the trigger food and occur within few hours. Non-IgE-mediated food allergy (delayed hypersensitivity reactions) are cell-mediated reactions with symptoms developing 48-72 hours after ingestion of the trigger food.

Food intolerance is defined as “non-immune reactions that include metabolic, toxic, pharmacologic, and undefined mechanisms”. The best example of reaction due to enzyme deficiency is lactose intolerance caused by a deficiency of lactase enzyme in affected individuals, leading to intolerance to milk and milk products that contain lactose. Individuals can also be sensitive to the pharmacological effect of some food ingredients like caffeine, biogenic amines or certain food additives.

While food allergies can be life-threatening, food intolerances may pose lesser risk with functional disorders. The pathophysiological differences between food allergy and food intolerance result in different diagnostic strategies and therapeutic options. Hence, getting an accurate diagnosis becomes critical for appropriate medication required to manage the condition including avoidance of trigger food.

### Symptoms, risk factors and prevalence of food allergies

A trace amount of protein/ allergen can trigger different symptoms in different individuals



affecting different systems in the body. The severity of the response may depend on the individual sensitivity and the amount of the protein/ allergen consumed. Symptoms can include any combination of local oral, dermatological, gastrointestinal and respiratory symptoms. The most severe reactions have systemic effects leading to a potentially fatal anaphylaxis.

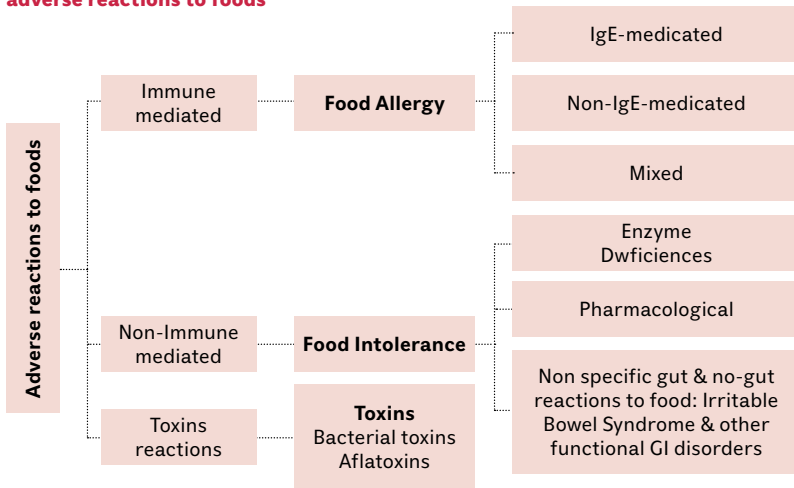
The manifestation of food allergy is influenced by genetics (G), environment (E), and G x E interactions. Several risk factors contribute to food allergy such as sex, race/ethnicity, and genetics. Some food allergies may be outgrown while some persist throughout life. Allergies that may be outgrown in childhood include milk, egg, wheat and soy. Other allergies like peanut, tree nut, fish, and shellfish are typically persistent for life.

A short list of foods account for most of the serious disease burden, namely peanut, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, egg, milk, wheat, soy, and seeds. Food allergies are common with up to 10% of population being affected. The prevalence of food allergies has increased in the last 2 to 3 decades, with more prevalence in persons in industrialized/westernized regions, and more common in children compared with adults. Peanut allergies are very common in the West, but are relatively rare in Asia. Shellfish allergies are more common in Asia than in the USA. Very limited data is available regarding the prevalence of food sensitization and probable food allergy among general population in India.

The first major study (EuroPrevall-INCO study) evaluated the prevalence of sensitization and food allergy to 24 common foods among adults from general population in Karnataka. A high level of sensitization (26.5%) was observed

**Food allergy is defined as “an adverse health effect arising from a specific immune response that occurs reproducibly on exposure to a given food, usually a naturally occurring protein”.**

**Figure 1: A classification scheme for different types of adverse reactions to foods**



with higher levels of food-specific IgE than most Western countries, but lower prevalence of probable food allergy, remain unclear and needs to be investigated further.

**Diagnosis and treatment of food allergies**

Getting an accurate diagnosis is the key that will allow appropriate medication required to manage the condition, including avoidance of trigger food. The elimination of any food from the diet is difficult and can cause nutritional deficiency; hence it is very important that any suspected reaction to a food is investigated medically. Individuals often identify food as the cause of the symptoms when it is not or identify the wrong food or too many foods. This can lead to unnecessary avoidance of diets. Proper diagnosis is required particularly in cases of life-threatening reactions to foods.

**Food allergen management**

The most common form of treatment is the avoidance of the food or food ingredient that triggers the adverse reaction. The ability to practice avoidance depends on factors outside the control of the individuals. Proper labeling of food products along with strict monitoring of labels is required for avoiding specific allergens. In order to fully assess their own products, food manufacturers must have accurate information about their ingredients and also understand their processing conditions related to allergen cross contact opportunities. The results of mislabeling, untrained workers and manufacturing processes with poor implementation of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) can be lethal for consumers. Food allergens management is becoming very important in food industry globally and several national regulations are addressing the allergen management by putting regulations in place for food manufacturers.

However, there is a great variation in allergen labeling requirements/ list of allergens to be declared among various countries (Table 1). While some countries like EU, Canada, Australia and New Zealand have an extended list of allergens, most countries have requirements of allergen declaration for 8 common allergenic foods as per the Codex standards for general labelling.

This lack of uniformity in allergen labelling requirements across countries impacts cross-border trade and food exporters should be aware of the differences across countries and allergen labelling requirements of importing countries. India does not have allergen labelling regulation in place as of now. However, the draft Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2018, includes a list of allergens to be declared which are as per the Codex guidelines.

**Food allergies and food intolerances are different from other food-borne diseases caused by food-borne pathogens that cause illness in humans by either infection or intoxication.**

for most of the foods in the general population, higher than that observed among adults in Europe. Shrimp and sesame seed were the most common sensitizers at 13% each, whereas foods most commonly associated with clinical symptoms of allergy were apple, fish, banana, cow’s milk, and melon. Participants in Bangalore had higher rates of sensitization than those in Mysore, reflective of the westernization of Bangalore in recent years. In contrast to the high rates of sensitization, the prevalence of food allergy was very low at 1.2%, with cow’s milk and apple being the most common allergens. The mean total IgE level from participants in India was higher than those observed in Europe. This is speculated to reflect the effect of significant exposure to air pollution, insect bites, and parasitic infections on IgE production. The reasons for the Indian population

**FOOD POISONING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS**





**Differences in Allergen labelling Requirements among countries**

COUNTRY	REMARKS
Codex General Standards for Labelling	Cereals containing gluten (like wheat, rye, barley, oats and their hybridized strains), Crustaceans, Eggs, Fish, Peanut, Soy, Milk (lactose included), Tree nuts, Sulfite > 10 mg/kg
Australia	Crustaceans, Egg, Fish, Milk, Peanut, Soy, Tree nuts, Wheat, Cereals with Gluten, Lupin, Molluscan Shellfish, Sesame, Sulfites >10 mg/kg, Bee Pollen/ Propolis and Royal Jelly
Canada	Cereals containing gluten, Crustaceans, Eggs, Fish, Peanut, Soy, Milk (lactose included), Tree nuts, Sulfite > 10 mg/kg, Mustard, Sesame, Molluscs
European Union	Cereals containing gluten, Crustaceans, Eggs, Fish, Peanut, Soy, Milk (lactose included), Tree nuts, Sulfite > 10 mg/kg, Celery, Mustard, Sesame, Lupin, Molluscs
India	Draft Standards follow Codex
Indonesia	Follows Codex with small modification - sulfites >100 pm
Japan	Shrimp/prawn, crab, wheat, buckwheat, egg, milk and peanuts. Voluntary labeling recommended for certain other products like abalone, squid, salmon roe, oranges, cashew nut, kiwifruit, beef, walnuts, sesame, salmon, mackerel, soybeans, chicken, bananas, pork, "matsutake" mushrooms, peaches, yams, apples and gelatin
Malaysia	Cereals containing gluten, nut and nut product including peanut and Soy, Fish, Milk, Egg
Philippines	Follows Codex
Singapore	Follows Codex
Thailand	Crustacean shellfish (Crab, shrimp, Mantis shrimp, lobster), Egg, Fish, Milk, Peanut, Soy, Tree nuts, Cereals with Gluten, Sulfites >10 mg/kg
New Zealand	Crustacean Shellfish, Egg, Fish, Milk, Peanut, Soy, Tree nuts, Wheat, Cereals with Gluten, Lupin, Molluscan Shellfish, Sesame, Sulfites >10 mg/kg, Bee Pollen/ Propolis and Royal Jelly
USA	Wheat, crustacean shellfish, fish, milk, egg, peanut, soy and tree nut

Source: <https://farrp.unl.edu>



**Conclusion**

There is a need to create awareness among the consumers about adverse reactions to food and the distinction between food allergies and intolerances that are often confused by individuals. The recent study (mentioned earlier) indicating high prevalence of sensitization to specific foods in India is a cause for concern and warrants more studies to understand the prevalence of sensitivities and allergies in the country. The reasons for the identified disassociation of sensitization and food allergies also need to be ascertained in the general population. Food allergen labelling is an important mechanism to reduce risk of exposure for individuals with food allergies. The draft FSSAI regulations prescribe the provision for labelling of food allergens and hopefully the final regulations will be notified soon. There is a great need for awareness for the consumer as well as training for the food business operators and food handlers about the allergens, their health implications and allergen management to make food safe for everyone. **PG**



The writer is Associate Vice President at Sathguru Management Consultants and leads the Food Processing and Retail practice. He is also an FSPCA Trainer of Trainer for Preventive Controls of Human Foods. He can be reached at [satyanarayanak@sathguru.com](mailto:satyanarayanak@sathguru.com).

# Keeping Center Store Relevant

5 ways to reinvigorate an underappreciated section of the store.

By **Bridget Goldschmidt**



**I**t doesn't get a lot of love these days, what with the current focus on fresh, but center store is still a force to be reckoned with. "Center store absolutely has an important role to play in large stores, and research shows that this area of the store is a key profit driver — 75 percent to 80 percent of grocery bottom-line profit is contributed by center store," asserts Ron Hughes, senior manager of shopper strategy and innovation at the Coca-Cola Co., in Atlanta. "On the other hand, we know Millennial consumers believe the center store is uninteresting and unappealing. In fact, 25 percent of Millennials say [that] the 'center store is a boring part of the store,' and 23 percent say, 'I almost get

claustrophobic when shopping center store.' Given that Millennials are a key shopper segment for growth, this presents a notable challenge."

Meanwhile, Shelley Balanko, Ph.D., SVP at The Hartman Group, in Bellevue, Wash., believes that the section "has lost a lot of relevance in modern eating. Today's consumers orient toward fresher eating and immediate consumption, so they are more inclined to shop the perimeter to meet their fresh-quality expectations and get inspired for immediate or very near-term cooking/assembly. Contemporary consumers have generalized their 'fresh expectations' from the perimeter to center store, and now use 'minimal processing' and natural product formulations as cues for 'fresh packaged' food in center store.



Unfortunately, the majority of conventional center store aisles fail to have a strong assortment of such products, and thus, center store slips in relevance.”

Faced with such drawbacks as these, how can the center store get its groove back? Following are some expert recommendations:

**1)** Engage shoppers through a spectrum of solutions: “It is important that we appeal to all cohorts, but especially Millennials,” advises Hughes. “We can do this by developing complete solutions that fit with their busy lives, that are environmentally conscious, and offer authenticity, which is very important to them. Calling out product features and benefits when defining value is very important as well.”

These complete solutions would “cross departments, from center store, frozen, produce and beverages, and ways to link perimeter purchases to key center store items can be effective,” he adds, going on to note, “Shoppers will require us to deliver on more experiential and holistic ideas across the total center store landscape.”

Balanko cautions, however, that retailers shouldn’t implement a single fix for all customers. “Provide a continuum of solutions for consumers who vary the degree of involvement in cooking/assembly from occasion to occasion,” she suggests. “Not everyone desires a complete solution or scratch ingredients all of the time.”

**2)** Focus on product offerings: “Despite declining to flat dollar sales earlier in the year, the center of the store continues to provide consumers with essential products to fulfill their everyday needs,” observes Jordan Rost, VP consumer insights at Schaumburg, Ill.-based Nielsen. “Encouraging the purchase of certain items can often drive higher overall basket sizes. Many center-of-store edibles rank highest as basket builders for driving larger purchases in-store,” among them popcorn and gum.

Beyond the staples, retailers should spotlight the special. “Increase the proportion of premium products – clean label, no legacy branding, contemporary cues of quality sourcing and production — to capture consumers’ attention and share of wallet,” advises Balanko. In fact, she predicts that the center store of the future will offer “a much smaller footprint with primarily young premium brands,



because consumers will be increasingly interested in trading up for freshness and premium quality, and there will be little room at shelf for brands that don’t deliver on quality expectations.”

“For products sold in the center of the store ... identify explicit consumer needs around health and what’s considered ‘clean,’ and then make sure product label claims appropriately publicize desirable attributes to win over consumers’ dollars,” recommends Rost.

For its part, Chicago-based market research firm Mintel observes that “[p]romoting premium and wholesome indulgences ... could be an effective way for retailers to drive incremental center store sales.”

The firm also puts forward a case for carrying more items that encourage shoppers to stimulate their taste buds: “[C]enter store categories that facilitate flavor exploration, such as spices and seasonings and hot sauce, ... generated better-than-average growth in [multioutlet sales] between 2011 and 2016. ... [I]nternational foods overall are projected to continue to generate moderate growth, driven by consumers’ expanding palates and exposure to a wider range of ethnic foods as the U.S. multicultural landscape evolves. The strong performance of these categories points to an opportunity to position the center store as a focal point for exploring new flavors and cuisines through serving ideas and recipes highlighted at the shelf and cross-promotions with perimeter departments.”

Additionally, recently introduced items should be highlighted for maximum impact.

“Dedicating convenient space to feature new items will become pervasive” in center stores of the future, according to Hughes. “A new-item center, for example, will provide excellent visibility with shoppers and can serve as incremental display space.”



**Identify explicit consumer needs around health and what’s considered ‘clean,’ and then make sure product label claims appropriately publicize desirable attributes to win over consumers’ dollars.**

— Jordan Rost  
Nielsen



**While online shopping can deter in-store traffic, center-of-store packaged items are the top areas driving online [fast-moving consumer goods] growth.**

**3)** Up the ante on merchandising: When deciding on the right mix of items, retailers should make sure they're accessibly placed. "We must get shelf presence right," notes Hughes. "Most of us get pretty overwhelmed by too much choice. If we can make the category both visible and shoppable, then we will have a better chance of turning shoppers into buyers."

Retailers shouldn't stop there, however. "Many center store aisles today adhere to the 'come find me' approach to merchandising and product presentation," he points out. "If we want to win with shoppers, we have to make shopping a much easier task, and much more fun and exciting." One way Coca-Cola has identified of doing just that is to offer "delightful and engaging end caps that interrupt the shopping experience, providing an arresting point of difference, having stopping power and providing an enjoyable place for shoppers to convene."

Balanko agrees that retailers should be more assertive in this area, suggesting that they "merchandise to inspire consumers for a variety of meal/snack occasions."

**4)** Incorporate tech into the shopping experience: "Embracing technology and social media in the in-store environment in an intentional and purposeful manner is a staple of future innovation," says Hughes, no doubt thinking of computer-savvy Millennial and Gen Z customers. To lure these "digitally engaged shoppers" to center store, supermarkets will need to understand the way they use technology, and adapt accordingly. "Along this journey, even social media could become a form of currency, sometimes carrying more weight than

money," he notes. "Trial will likely be leveraged through social media, i.e., Instagram photos and Facebook posts about the brand."

Ecommerce is another important consideration. "While online shopping can deter in-store traffic, center-of-store packaged items are the top areas driving online [fast-moving consumer goods] growth, meaning potential growth opportunities for retailers and manufacturers alike," says Nielsen's Rost.

It's not just the internet that retailers should be leveraging, though. "We also know that shoppers will want a mobile-led interaction and multisensory solutions with intentional use of lighting, digital, scent and sound experiences," observes Hughes, adding, "Technologies such as informational and self-service kiosks will become more pervasive throughout the total path to purchase of the future store."



**5)** Make optimal use of physical space: Even as they acknowledge the importance of technology, supermarkets shouldn't neglect the unique attributes of their brick-and-mortar center stores. "Retailers are transforming their stores to amplify the benefits of three-dimensional space," says Hughes. "The goal? To motivate store visits and loyalty by delivering a new type of value that is differentiated from what can be found on the internet." He further notes that grocery sections of the future "will enable like-minded consumers to converge and connect in their physical spaces, especially with sampling/trial and connections with food-and-beverage pairings, which must be integrated into the traditional center store format," and that "destinations with one-stop shops — i.e., store-within-a-store concepts — for all similar-occasion needs will become more and more the norm and will deliver on shopper convenience."

Ultimately, notes Hughes, "While there isn't a perfect silver bullet to grow retail sales or re-energize the center store, we are confident that if retailers are prepared to test new solutions and try new things, they will stay ahead of the game." **PG**





# THE INDIA FOOD REPORT 2018-19

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# Creating safe eating environments with smart technology

By **George Pepes**

Robust economic growth, rising incomes, increasing urbanization and greater penetration of technology are driving consumption and fuelling the growth of the Indian food and beverage service retail industry. As such, there has been an increased focus on food safety, especially in terms of its preparation, packaging and distribution.

**T**he food industry is notoriously tough. Getting the front-of-house right is just the tip of the iceberg; executing the extensive list of tasks behind the scenes is extremely complex. This can often mean that employees spend more time ensuring that processes are compliant and complete than focusing on ensuring an unforgettable customer experience.

The Indian consumer's preferences are changing at a very fast pace, leading to an evolving landscape for its food industry as well. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) has forecasted that the food service industry will be experiencing a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 10 percent over the five-year period from 2017 to 2022. Comparatively, the Chinese and South Korean industries are only expected to grow at CAGRs of 4.4 percent and 3.6 percent respectively over the same period.

This scenario has given rise to the need for better food hygiene and food storage management, which are crucial elements in the hospitality industry, paramount to ensuring businesses remain reputable and ensuring the safety of their

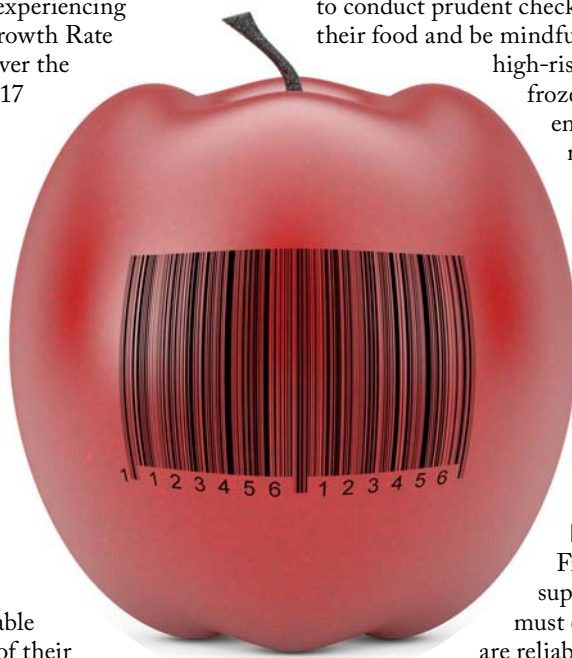
customers. Inadequate management of produce at any point in the supply chain, from warehouse to the restaurant floor, can have wide-ranging consequences. In the first place, low confidence amongst consumers can result in revenue loss as they begin to choose alternative options. Fines can be imposed, and even arrests made if negligence occurs.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has laid down stringent guidelines to ensure that food safety regulations are observed across the country. FSSAI stipulates that all food establishments are to be careful during the procurement of their raw materials. They are also to conduct prudent checks on the expiry dates of their food and be mindful of the temperatures for high-risk food like milk products, frozen food and meat, so as to ensure safe storage of raw materials and food articles.

Therefore, it becomes imperative, that the restaurant and hospitality supply chain innovate and harness new technologies to keep up with consumers demands as well as the food regulatory.

## From Warehouse to Kitchen

From the very start of the supply chain, businesses must ensure that operations are reliable and compliant with



**Inadequate management of produce at any point in the supply chain, from warehouse to the restaurant floor, can have wide-ranging consequences.**



legislation. Sophisticated food tastes, varying origins of produce and the increased focus on different diets and allergies make food storage an extremely picky process. It's not just a case of cold or frozen storage; produce must be kept in a variety of temperatures depending on individual requirements. Meanwhile, all allergens must be properly labelled and kept away from foods deemed "allergen free" and cross contamination must not occur. Managing the stockroom is an endless proposition.

In parallel to managing inventory and stock, there is a growing desire among patrons and owners to know the exact origin and journey of food. To manage this process manually is near impossible and will undoubtedly lead to mistakes. Easy to scan codes on produce teamed with smart databases mean the full spectrum of information is always quickly available.

Intelligent cold chain solutions can effectively manage the transportation of goods and increase worker efficiency if implemented in the right way. For instance, by arming workers with cold-rated handheld or wearable devices that can withstand temperature swings allows workers to manage stock and scan areas for issues or inconsistencies. They'll have increased visibility over the individual needs of the produce they are working with, removing the need for guesswork. As a result, workers have access to real-time information at their fingertips, straight from the inventory management database. This ultimately empowers workers to achieve flawless fulfilment, no matter where the operation must take place.

**Storage in the Kitchen**

Storage of dry and raw food in the kitchen is one of the most important food preparation steps and as such, strict legal guidelines must be followed. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, it is a legal requirement that chilled food be kept at 8°C or below. This is also promoted by the CFA worldwide. In tandem, open food stuffs must be wrapped and labelled with strict use-by or best-before dates clearly visible. Similarly, in India, FSSAI suggests that the temperatures of high-risk food, such as frozen foods, meat and milk products must be maintained to ensure safe storage of raw materials and food articles.

Meanwhile, foods that need to remain frozen, such as ice-cream or frozen meat must be stored in the freezer as soon as they are delivered and restaurants should strictly follow the "once opened, consume within # days" advice. Leaving frozen or raw food out at higher temperatures especially in warmer temperature puts customer safety and quality at risk.



**In parallel to managing inventory and stock, there is a growing desire among patrons and owners to know the exact origin and journey of food.**

To adhere to these strict regulations, efficient and accurate labelling is imperative, but this is not necessarily as easy as one might think. Kitchens are a difficult ecosystem to navigate. They can be simultaneously hot and cold in different areas – damp and dry. As such, traditional labels can fall off, smudge or simply not be effective. In tandem, the sheer volume of different ingredients in different dishes and products means things are constantly changing – no one label is the same. However, if even one seemingly insignificant piece of information is not relayed correctly, the consequences could be severe.

By arming workers and kitchens with specially designed compact printers, businesses can ensure produce is labelled efficiently and most importantly, accurately. Their size allows them to be placed in busy or cramped environments without causing disruption to workers, whilst being readily available to provide unique labels for each new product. Not only this, they also print specialised labels that can withstand a multitude of environments. **PG**



The writer is APAC Vertical Solutions Marketing Lead for Retail, Healthcare and Hospitality, Zebra Technologies

# what's next



◀ **Myprotein launches Diwali special gift box with protein-packed treats**

Myprotein has launched a Diwali special gift box containing healthy snacking treats like protein bars, cookies and brownies for fitness lovers in India. The special edition box, which has been curated especially for Diwali festivities, contains new bars and snacks

launched by Myprotein – Baked Protein Cookie, Protein Brownie and Protein Flapjack, as well as an accessory, a Minishaker.

The Baked Protein Cookie is a vegan friendly, protein-packed treat with added dark chocolate chunks. Each cookie packs 13.5 gm of protein, enough to support your training as well as satisfy the sweet tooth cravings this holiday season. The Protein Brownie is another high protein treat with 22.5 gm protein mixed with the goodness of chocolate, making it an ideal on the go snack. The Protein Flapjack, packed with protein and carbohydrates is the perfect snack to satisfy your post-workout cravings. Finally, the Minishaker is durable and small, which can be used to mix different kinds of healthy shakes and can also be carried in one's gym bag or backpack at all times because of its convenient size.

All three new products are high in protein and provide a healthy alternative to traditional sweets, so that one doesn't have to miss out on having a sweet treat. The Diwali boxes are limited edition and will be available for sale only during the Diwali festive season on [www.myprotein.co.in](http://www.myprotein.co.in)

▼ **Wagh Bakri introduces new premium leaf tea in reusable festive pack jar**

Wagh Bakri Tea has introduced its new 1.5 kg Festive Pack in a reusable air-tight jar that provides rich, aromatic tea. Launched once every year, this festive pack comes in 3 individual packs of 500 gm of premium leaf tea in an attractive reusable air-tight jar, which is made up of 100% virgin material, recyclable with a shape that'll fit into any space in a kitchen shelf. One can not only accumulate those sturdy recyclable jars and but can also be used as gift sets to give your loved ones this festive season.

The festive pack of Wagh Bakri tea comes with an attractive container made of high-quality food-grade pet material, is air-tight, and the very shape fits into the space in kitchen shelves. The objective behind the launch of this festive pack is to provide quality tea to the customers for whom tea is an integral part of daily lives. Wagh Bakri Tea is preferred by connoisseurs as one of the finest blends of tea. The blend had been prepared by Wagh Bakri's expert tea tasters and promises a rich combination of aroma, taste, color, flavor, and strength.

The new and exciting range of Wagh Bakri 1.5 kg festive pack is available at all leading stores near you in reusable sturdy air-tight jar.



▶ **Mad Over Donuts comes out with limited edition flavors for festive season**

India's favorite donuts brand, Mad Over Donuts has launched 3 limited-edition flavors that'll have you set for the festive season. The three festival favorites will be well stocked across all their stores in India to ensure that no celebration is mundane. These include delectable new flavors such as: Grand Gulkand – made with rose petals and gulkand, this donut is light, flavorful and perfect for the season. Not to mention the touch of tradition that it adds to the palate; Magnificent Mawa – filled with mava peda custard dip in dark chocolate, topped with a thick drizzle of mava peda custard and garnished with almond flakes; Joyous Jalebi – dig right into this delightful, evergreen combination of jalebi and elaichi, sprinkled with love. This donut is filled with jalebi and mava peda custard dip in white chocolate, topped with whole jalebi and garnished with pistachio flakes.

As always at Mad Over Donuts, all donuts are 100% eggless to ensure everyone can savor them, and are made in-house from scratch with their signature dough. They can be ordered online on all platforms and also personally picked out from your nearest Mad Over Donuts outlet.

Mad Over Donuts' Diwali flavors are perfect for gifting as well as taking home for your own celebration, and are priced at Rs. 97.





### ► **Pride Of Cows to introduce new milk variants**

Pride Of Cows – a farm to home fresh milk concept – which delivers milk straight from the farm to one's home in refrigerated conditions, is planning to expand its product portfolio by introducing new milk variants. Currently, the company is catering to 25,000 households in Mumbai, Pune and Surat, Delhi and Singapore. The brand aims to reach out to more households across the country by planning to increase the production at the farm.

Pride of Cows offers the best cow milk in every way — bottled and delivered fresh, chilled to 4 degree Celsius, to your doorstep through a process that is completely mechanized from start to finish. This ensures that you reap all the benefits of milk.

Priced at Rs. 95 per litre in Mumbai and Rs. 120 per litre in Delhi-NCR, consumers can subscribe to the premium milk on the Pride of Cows website by undergoing an online registration process.



### ▲ **The Date House introduces premium dates from the freshest of sources**

The Date House, a one stop destination for all the premium dates from organic to chocolate coated, is introducing its dates to India as a healthy and delicious alternative to sweets. This introductory product portfolio from Date House – which brings only the freshest of dates from the freshest of sources – includes imported dates from Saudi Arabia & Jordan. The dates have the healthiest of ingredients, contain natural sugar, no fat and no cholesterol.

The Date House product lines are being introduced for the first time in India. These include: Pitted Dates, an anytime energy booster price at Rs. 599; Premium Filled Dates with a filling of fresh imported nuts in the price range of Rs. 1399-1799; Premium Filled Chocolate Dates coated with 3 different types of chocolate (Rose Valley, Dark, Milk & White) at a price range of Rs.1399-1799; Ajwa Dates, the most premium of all dates due to its quality and its religious relevance, priced at Rs. 1599; Premium Organic Dates, certified by ECOCERT and priced at Rs. 1399.

Made with the freshest processes, the dates are completely fat-free, with no added sugars either. They can help make your sweet tooth cravings as healthy as can be. For availability, visit The Date House website, <https://thedatehouse.com>

### ▼ **Celebrate Diwali with Teabox fine collection of exquisite teas**

Premium tea brand Teabox has introduced an extraordinary collection of tea gifts that spell style and finesse. The collection is a thoughtfully crafted collection of fine teas and exclusive teaware, making it a splendid gifting option suitable for any occasion.

From tea gifts created with the theme of Indian heritage to those especially created for true tea connoisseurs, every tea box has an essence of sophistication. Maya, Rasa, Raga and Kaja are designed to symbolize purity, divinity, beauty, power and emotions. These Teabox gifts include artwork that makes each piece stand out. And a varying assortment of special teas in every gift renders them incredibly appealing.

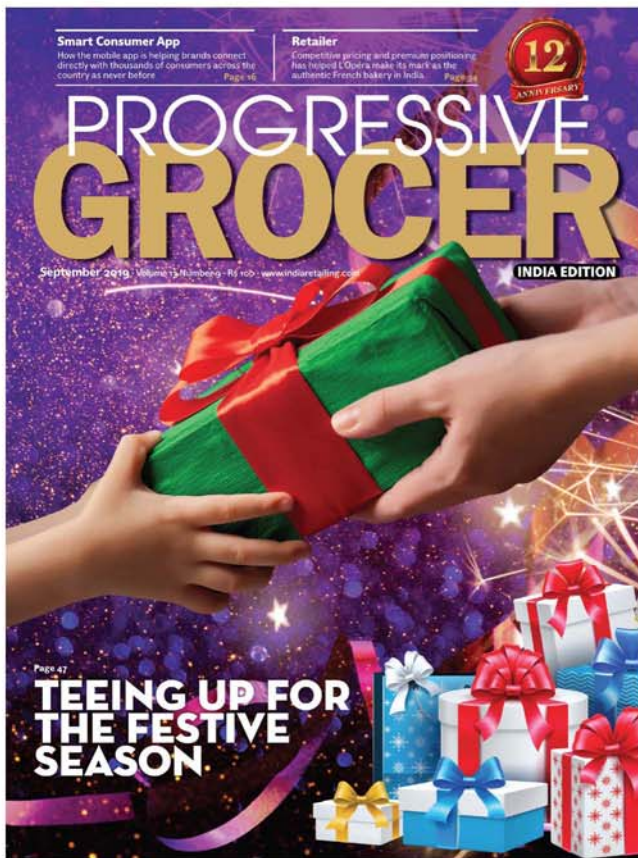
The Tea Epicure Collection including Dolce, Vernal, Arome, Perle, Arcadia, and Fleur are curations for tea enthusiasts who love to delve into the nuances of their special brew. These tea gifts are themed around the surreal wonders of nature drawing an association between the soft, gentle, vibrant and youthful qualities of Mother Nature and the drink that soothes the soul.

Choose from these two exclusive gift collections or customize your own tea box picking your favourite teas from exotic teas like summer muscatel black tea, chamomile green tea, hibiscus lush tisane, mountain rose black tea, and fruit blends like mango strawberry black tea, fruits and nuts tisane, orange pineapple black tea. Teabox also offers elegant tea accessories like tea infusers, tea sets, tea storage and tea tools for tea décor that make for perfect accompaniments to the teas.





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**DECEMBER 2019 CONFECTIONERY:** The sector is witnessing a growing demand for functional chocolates that are high in nutritional value in keeping with the increasing health awareness levels among consumers.

**JANUARY 2020 INTERNATIONAL AND IMPORTED FOODS:** The key for food business operators is to maintain the balance between aspiration and tradition, while offering exposure to the trends originating in the West.

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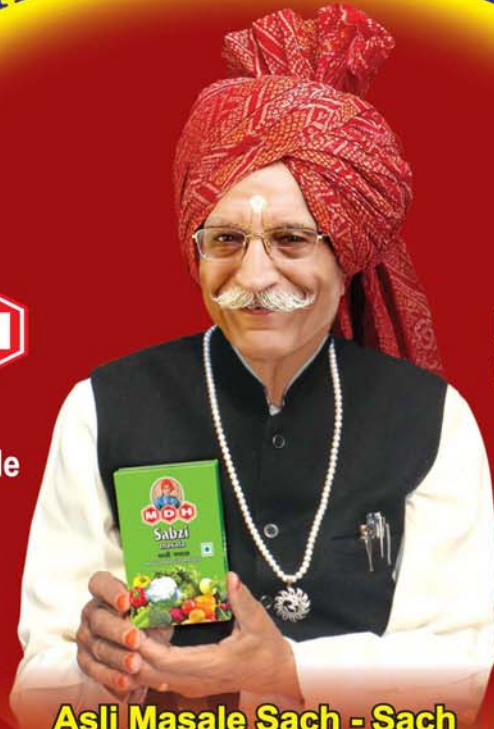
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