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OCTOBER 2019

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COVER STORY

SCAN & GO:

SEAMLESS PAYMENTS,
SELF-CHECKOUTS DISRUPT CONSUMER
EXPERIENCE

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There are many factors to success in the world of retail – the right product, the perfect store design and a seamless supply chain. There is another element which increases a retailer's standing among consumers and that is technology.

Elevating retailers among peers and changing his impression among consumers are payment, checkout and loyalty programs, factors that are extremely significant in helping businesses thrive. Retailers today are working towards fusing loyalty with payments technology to simplify shopping for the customer.

Over time, customer loyalty programs have evolved and are built into payment systems, relying more on technology than ever before. The idea is to give customers more of what they want and reward them for repeat business, and they will keep coming back. Couple these with cashier-, queue-less checkouts and retailers have a winning combination.

The focus issue of IMAGES Retail's October 2019 issue is the 'Relevance of Payment, Checkout and Loyalty Programs'. The magazine brings readers insights into why these are noteworthy components in the world of retail, and why brands which ignore it do at their own cost.

Aside from this, the edition delves into the success of two big brands like Alibaba, Amazon and aLL, analysing how the brands are successfully making an impact in the world of retail. There is also an indepth feature on brands and their global expansion plans.

The issue also brings readers the scoop on sustainability, and how brands are working towards redefining the world of fashion retail, fostering change to both products as well as the entire system towards greater ecological integrity and social justice.

As always, we hope you find this issue informed and beneficial.



Amitabh Taneja

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Printed & published by S P Taneja on behalf of Images Multimedia Pvt. Ltd. Printed at Modest Print Pack (P) Ltd. C-52, D.D.A. Shed Okhla Industrial Area Phase -1, New Delhi - 110 020 and published by S P Taneja from S - 21 Okhla Industrial Area Phase - 2, New Delhi 110 020
Editor: Amitabh Taneja

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**SCAN & GO:
SEAMLESS PAYMENTS, SELF-CHECKOUTS DISRUPT CONSUMER EXPERIENCE**



With the majority of online growth driven by pure-play e-commerce brands, most retailers still rely more on in-store purchases than online sales. Services like self-checkout and cashier-less payment systems then make a huge impact here. Couple this technology – the buzzword for today's Millennial shopper – with loyalty programs and traditional retailers have a winning system



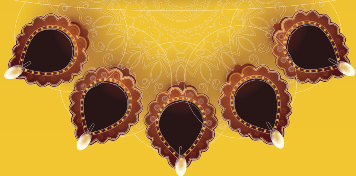
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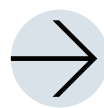


FDI RELAXATION POLICIES TO USHER IN AN ERA OF GROWTH FOR INDIAN RETAIL

New FDI rules and single brand retailer policies set by the government will assure an influx of investment in the retail industry, ensuring robust growth over the next few years. IMAGES Retail brings you a lowdown of what's making news in the national space over the last month...

By IMAGES Retail Bureau

NEW FDI RULES IN INDIAN RETAIL SECTOR REASSURE INFLUX OF INVESTMENTS: GLOBALDATA



The Ministry of Commerce of India has recently announced a slew of relaxations on single-brand retail's FDI investments. The new FDI norms can be seen as an effort by the government to encourage investments and create employment opportunities over the next five years, says GlobalData, a leading data and analytics

company. According to GlobalData, the Indian retail sector is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10.4 percent between 2018 and 2022. During the same period, the physical as well as online channels are expected to grow at CAGRs of 9.7 percent and 29.4 percent, respectively.

Suresh Sunkara, Retail Analyst at GlobalData, comments: "The latest policy has eased the norms that permit 30 percent local sourcing by brands on an average over a five year block, rather

than in a single year. This can also be seen as a move by the ministry to exploit the ongoing trade tensions between China and the US and attract investments into India by creating a business friendly environment."

All the procurement done by a brand will be considered under the 30 percent clause, whether or not the goods procured are sold in India or exported. In addition, procurement done by group entities for the brand (including global operations) is considered within the 30 percent clause, favouring the retailers' interests.



Foreign single-brand retailers can now launch their online operations within the country without a physical presence. However, they are required to open a brick and mortar store within two years of the launch of online operations. Within hours of the news, Apple announced to launch its online operations in India before its first physical store in the country in 2020.

ALLOWING SINGLE-BRAND RETAILERS TO SELL ONLINE FIRST TO HELP GLOBAL FIRMS TAP INDIAN MARKET: DELOITTE



The government's announcement to allow single-brand retailers to sell goods online first before opening brick-and-mortar stores is a win-win for global players to tap the domestic market, consultancy firm Deloitte said on Saturday.

The government recently relaxed norms for single-brand retailers having foreign investment to attract global players. It has now permitted them to sell goods through online stores before opening brick-and-mortar stores within two years.

It has also relaxed certain provisions for complying with the mandatory 30 percent local sourcing requirements.

“A retail company can now start selling to the Indian consumers via online platform and open up a physical store later (within a period of two years). This is going to be a clear win-win for global retailers to tap the Indian market sitting overseas,” Anil Talreja, Partner at Deloitte India was quoted by PTI as saying.



He said the move would also give a boost to the pillars of the Indian retail industry in the form of transportation, payments, customer care and warehousing.

“The Indian customer stands to gain as he gets the goods before the opening of the store in India. The retailer stands to gain as he can tap the Indian market earlier than never before,” he added.

On permitting 100 percent foreign direct investment in contract manufacturing, Talreja said that with this the government has substantially expanded the arena for the foreign investors to play in India.

INDIAN FOOD AND RETAIL INDUSTRY TO GROW TO US\$ 482 BILLION BY 2020

The Indian food and retail industries are expected to grow to US\$ 482 billion by 2020, said a statement released by Kagome Foods India on Friday.

“According to industry estimates, the contribution of the food processing industry to India’s GDP through manufacturing has been more than 8 percent in FY17. The Indian food and



retail industry is expected to grow to US\$ 482 billion by 2020,” the statement said.

“The food processing market is ripe for the picking, and brands such as Kagome, that offer processed tomato foods, are leading the charge in making preservative free products. They leverage their own vertically-integrated value chain, which guarantees consistent quality and price throughout the year, without added preservatives, colour or flavour.”

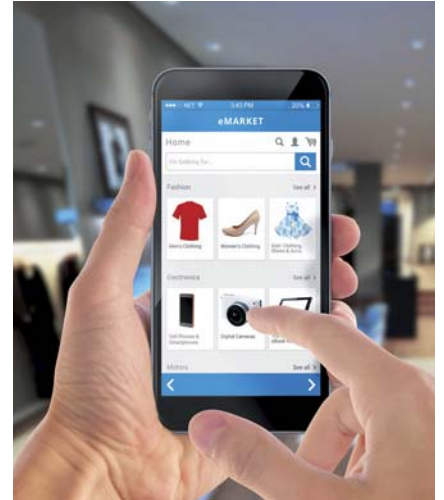
Rohit Bhatla, MD of Kagome Foods India, said, “The Indian food processing market is growing faster than any other. Whether it is salads, home-cooked meals, ready-to-eat packets, or a specific ingredient-based offering, the country’s busy diaspora wants nutritious food, without investing too much time and effort into the process.

“The role of technology in scaling up operations in the sector will be tremendous. The government is also aiding the development of food processing infrastructure,” he added.

INDIAN E-COMMERCE MARKET SIZE SET TO TOUCH US\$ 230 BILLION BY 2028

The Indian e-commerce market size is likely to reach US\$ 230 billion in a decade as it’s outpacing the offline retail segment’s growth, according to a report released in September.

“The Indian e-commerce market is



outpacing the offline retail growth and is expected to touch US\$ 230 billion by 2028. India is at the cusp of a massive online boom, fueled by low data tariffs, affordable smartphones and growing Internet usage,” the report by the E-Commerce Council of India (TECI) and ChannelPlay said.

According to the report, another 40-50 crore shoppers are expected to come online in 10 years, joining the nearly 10 crore online shoppers in India. “E-commerce in India has grown beyond the first wave of metro consumers in Tier-I cities. It is now rapidly adding millions of buyers from Tier-II, III cities and beyond,” it said.

M2K GROUP APPOINTS VISHESH RAWAT AS MARKETING, SALES AND LEASING HEAD

M2K group appoints Dr. Vishesh Rawat to lead the marketing, sales & leasing of the retail & commercial vertical of the company. An MBA and PhD in marketing, Rawat is a senior real estate professional with a proven successful track record of 20 years in marketing, sales, business development, leasing, CRM and strategy. He has deep insight of real estate markets across India. He has been a distinguished speaker at different national & International real estate forums and key note speaker at many marketing conferences.



GLOBAL RETAILERS TURN TO INNOVATION FOR A ONE-OF-A-KIND RETAIL EXPERIENCE

Global retailers are using all types of innovations – product, store, services – as part of their strategy to offer new services to enhance customer experience. IMAGES Retail brings a roundup of what's making news in the international retail arena over the last month...

By IMAGES Retail Bureau

NIKE ANNOUNCES SIRI-CONTROLLABLE 'ADAPT HUARACHE' SELF-LACING SHOES



Nike has announced the latest iteration of its Adapt Huaraches, with the standout feature being a self-lacing motor that can be controlled using Siri, Apple's digital voice assistant.

The shoes are a redesign of the original Nike Huarache and use the same FitAdapt technology as the Nike Adapt BB released earlier this year.

Nike's FitAdapt lacing system is run from a midfoot motor and is controlled by the Nike Adapt app. Using the app, wearers of the Nike Adapt Huarache can set up a number of preset fits for their foot type and activity.

According to the press release, the new

Adapt Huarache sneakers also work with the Apple Watch and Siri, allowing you to simply ask Siri to lace or unlace the shoes.

The new sneakers from the Nike stable feature the same neoprene supportive exoskeleton that did duty on the original 1991 Air Huaraches, lending continuity to the brand, while accommodating technological advances. The latest edition of the iconic sneakers will include two LED lights that are capable of changing colours if users tinker with the settings on the app.

The two modes are dependent on foot type. The preset modes are 'Chill' and 'Move,' causing the sole and body of the shoe to adapt to everyday situations such as working out in the gym, reclining in a chair at office, or standing in a metro coach during one's daily commute.



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BANANA REPUBLIC INTRODUCES RENTAL SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE FOR WOMEN



Banana Republic has launched, Style Passport, an online subscription service that provides unlimited access to its women's apparel collection. The brand will roll out the service at the end of September to customers in the United States, with the

goal of adding men's apparel at a later date.

A robust Omni-experience is critical as today's consumer shops in a variety of ways. Rental subscription is an innovative platform that will increase access to Banana Republic's versatile style and help bring new customers to the brand.

"We're constantly evolving with our customer, meeting her where she is shopping. Style Passport will drive incremental revenue and help us connect with younger shoppers who appreciate great style and want an affordable, sustainable way to try new fashion," said Mark Breitbard, CEO and President of Banana Republic. "With this new service, we'll gather valuable insights from a highly interactive customer base that can be used to design future product and experiences."

Banana Republic is committed to



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integrating sustainability throughout the business from sustainable fibers to environment-friendly practices. Style Passport provides an easy way for customers to own fewer items while improving their wardrobe with fashion for every occasion. The new service will allow customers to rent the Republic for one flat monthly fee, with the option to keep and purchase any favorite item.

Style Passport is US\$ 85 per month for a three-garment plan that includes free priority shipping, unlimited exchanges and returns, and complimentary laundering services.

APPETITE FOR ONLINE RETAIL SITES AMONG KIDS GROWS THREEFOLD

More children are taking to e-commerce sites for looking at products (and sometimes buying) as new research by cyber security firm Kaspersky has found that the interest of children in online shopping has more than tripled in the last 12 months — from two per cent to nine percent.

According to the statistics, youngsters' growing interest in e-commerce sites is a global trend, however the extent varies depending on location, said the Kaspersky Lab's annual report on kids' safety.

At 23 percent, the largest share (and also biggest growth) in online shopping searches has been seen in Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the findings showed.

While there are clearly some regional differences, the most searched for retailers by children across the globe include AliExpress, Amazon and Ebay. When it comes to Chinese retailers in particular, kids' queries are growing steadily year on year. Sports apparel (Nike, Adidas), electronics (Apple, Samsung), and fashion brands (Gucci, Vans, Supreme, Zara, Bershka) are the most searched for sites among this young consumer audience, said the report. But searching for goods online, as well as visiting specific retailers' pages does not necessarily imply actual spending. Kids might just be looking at things they want or compiling 'wish lists' to share with friends and family.

"The Internet offers a lot of opportunities



for kids, and we are now seeing many children becoming a key audience for online retailers," said Anna Larkina, a web content analysis expert at Kaspersky.

PUMA'S NYC FLAGSHIP STORE SEAMLESSLY INTEGRATES TECHNOLOGY, ART & MUSIC

Puma has opened the doors to its first-ever North American flagship store, located at 609 Fifth Avenue in New York City.

With a focus on cutting-edge technology and products, the store showcases an immersive Puma brand space — offering consumers a unique shopping experience through innovative sports engagement zones, a customisation studio and digitally connected offerings. The store features 18,000 square feet of interactive retail space spanning two floors, with state-of-the-art double-height storefronts across 160 feet of wraparound frontage.

"Puma is thrilled to open its first flagship in New York City, in a prime Manhattan location, that will allow us to connect with both our U.S. and international customers," said Bjoern Gulden Chief Executive Officer of Puma SE. "I believe investing in this new store — in one of the fastest paced cities in the world — will help us in our pursuit to be the fastest sports brand in the world. We're committed to pushing the boundaries of sports, fashion and technology, and this store is the latest manifestation of that commitment."

Puma has partnered with renowned artists and designers to bring its exclusive Puma x YOU customization studio to the store. Consumers can customize and personalize Puma footwear, apparel



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and accessories using paints, dyes, patchwork, embroidery, 3D-knitting, laser printing, pinning, material upcycling, and many other creative mediums. New artist residencies begin every two weeks — including collaboration partners like Sue Tsai, BWOOD, Maria Jahnkoy, Mème. and Pintrill, with additional artists announced later this year.

Highlighting Puma's long standing commitment to motorsports, consumers can hop into professional-grade F1 racing simulators and virtually race down the streets of New York City.

If soccer is more their speed, consumers can test the latest Puma boots on the in-store simulator that mimics the pitch of San Siro Stadium, all the while being virtually coached by Puma brand ambassadors and professional footballers Antoine Griezmann and Romelu Lukaku.

Within Puma's new store, customers can view products in alternate colors and styles through iMirror by NOBAL placed throughout the store. iMirror allows RFID product to bring up alternative selections based on the item the consumer tries on. In addition, consumers can press a button to notify an associate they need help at the mirror and sign up for in-store events.

Consumers can kick back and enjoy the stadium seating and large screen NBA2K gaming experience in the basketball zone as well. The basketball zone is also going to feature state-of-the-art technology including QR codes located on all products.

Throughout the year, the New York flagship will also feature exclusive collections designed by select brand ambassadors and athletes, and host unique events and experiences authentic to New York City. The flagship store will carry the full range of Puma products including lifestyle, basketball, motorsport, golf, performance, soccer and kids.

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Millennials will be Key Luxury Drivers

India is home to one of the youngest populations in the world and it will continue to remain so until 2030 with average age of 31 as opposed to its Western (40 in the USA) and Eastern (42 in China) counterparts. India will add more breadwinners to the world than any other nation. This population will be reared in a more confident and open India and thus, will aspire to live a better life, splurging money on discretionary items unlike their previous generational counterparts. Looking ahead, this favorable demographics will drive strong luxury consumption growth.

→ **This generation will want luxury to be more meaningful, to reflect their individuality and values rather than just being a status symbol.**



Rise of Gen Z

By 2030, India is estimated to have around 370 million Gen Z consumers between the ages 10-25. For them, digital will be the 'new norm'. They will embrace tech-driven consumption models. They will have a distinct set of values and beliefs as compared to Gen Y. This segment will redefine the rules of the luxury market. Luxury companies need to pay close attention to this group as they will be

Unraveling the Indian Luxury Market in 2030

Over the next decade, the Indian luxury market is well poised to see positive growth on the back economic development, greater connectedness and policy reforms, all of which will offer a plethora of opportunities for luxury companies to serve young, affluent, connected and confident Indian consumers...

By Sheetal Jain, Founder & CEO, Luxe Analytics

India is one of the fastest growing luxury markets in the world. The size of Indian luxury market is expected to grow from the current \$30 billion to more than \$200 billion in 2030. Over the next decade, the segment is well poised to see positive growth through economic development, greater connectedness and policy reforms, all of which will offer a plethora of opportunities for luxury companies to serve young, affluent, connected and confident Indian consumers.

Following is a compilation of the 6 major trends for Indian luxury market over the next decade that will help luxury companies predict the segment's future in the Indian market:

the influencers of the future. Gen Z will choose brands that are ethical, socially responsible and transparent. They will look for more brand interaction and will have greater influence of social media than traditional marketing channels while making purchase decisions.

→ **Luxury companies should work towards development of technologies such as IOT, AI and VR to be able to provide more opportunities to new-age buyers for brand engagement.**



Growing Middle Class

It is predicted that middle-income households will grow from \$158 million in 2018 to \$300 million by 2030 (World Economic Forum, 2018). The upper middle-income households will drive 47 percent of total consumption as opposed to the current 30 percent. Over the next decade, 80 percent of incremental spend will be driven by middle-income consumers. These consumers will particularly climb up the ladder and demand better products and services. Therefore, luxury companies should offer a huge variety of 'masstige' brands in categories such as apparel, accessories, watches, handbags and personal care products. Also, spending on entertainment, health and fitness, travel and dining out will substantially increase, which will provide immense opportunities for high-end global players to penetrate in these segments in India. For instance, a recent research by Bain PRICE estimated that dining out could well be a \$400 billion opportunity in 2030.

→ **Luxury marketers cannot ignore middle-class consumers as they will be the growth engine of Indian luxury market**



A More Connected India

In India, internet users are expected to increase from the current 627 million to around 1.1 billion by 2030, as per the recent report by the World Economic Forum. This will produce more informed consumers who will expect brands to be more transparent. Democratisation of internet access will provide a huge opportunity for luxury brands to reach consumers in the interiors of India something which would have otherwise been a great challenge for luxury brands – tapping a dispersed and fragmented Indian market.

→ **In the future, e-commerce will play a major role in bringing luxury in the forefront.**



Luxury Going to Smaller Towns

As per a recent report by the World Economic Forum, India's top 40 cities will constitute of \$1.5 trillion market by 2030. With the increase in purchasing power, urbanisation, brand awareness, brand consciousness, social media, easy access and growing aspirations, Indian consumers residing in large as well as small towns will be willing to spend more on luxury items. There will be tremendous

change in consumers' outlook and purchasing patterns. From high-end luxury automobiles, upscale restaurants to affluent lifestyle brands, there will be ample demand coming from different segments across India.

→ **Luxury companies looking for growth will require to reach a highly spread continuum of large and small towns.**



Tech-led Business Models

New business models driven by technology such as rental services, subscription models, etc. will be future business models in India. As per a report by PricewaterhouseCoopers, the rental market will reach \$335 billion by 2025 globally and Indian share is estimated to be around \$35 billion. Young consumers believe in 'usership' more than 'ownership'. They seek for experience, convenience and variety. Therefore, more and more such users will favor sharing economy. Startups like The Clothing Rental, Flyrobe, The Stylease, Rentit Bae, etc. see huge growth potential across India for such models in future.

→ **With evolving consumer attitudes and high internet penetration, luxury consumption on sharing basis will be next big thing in the Indian market across categories including watches, apparel, bags and automobiles, to name a few.**

As per Euromonitor Report, 77 percent of India's populace will include Millennials and Gen Z in 2030. These young, affluent, tech-savvy and buoyant consumers will pave the way for further innovation in products, services and business models in luxury realm. **IR**



When one thinks of loyalty programs, the first thing that comes to mind is an attractive card that can be flaunted in the wallet. But look at the history of loyalty programs and you will realise that they go beyond just giving the customer a cool card for some discounts and cashbacks. The science and glamour accompanying loyalty programs today lead one to believe that the phenomenon was started by a bigshot retailer a few decades ago. In reality, customer loyalty programs date back to the 19th century. Originally the product of the imagination of a few retailers in America, the initiative comprised of American retailers giving customers copper tokens with purchases that could be redeemed later for products on future purchases. Yes, you read it right. Loyalty programs initially set their base in copper!

From Copper Coins to Mobile Apps: The Evolution & Success of Retail Loyalty Programs

The journey of loyalty programs from copper to paper followed by the sophisticated plastic cards and now just mobile numbers has undergone a massive transformation. The purpose of the initiative too has seen a revolution – from simply offering discounts to helping a brand build an emotional connect with its customers...

By Zainab S Kazi



The journey of loyalty programs from copper to paper followed by the sophisticated plastic cards and now just mobile numbers has undergone a massive transformation. The purpose of the initiative too has seen a revolution – from simply offering discounts to helping a brand build an emotional connect with its customers.

Loyalty Programs & the Indian Retailer

Indian retailers – whether they are the national retail chains or local mom and pop stores, all of them seem to have mastered the art of winning over their patrons. Where the big names have at their disposal the logistics and bandwidth to offer a full fledged loyalty programs, one cannot overlook the local retail / *kirana* stores who ensure that they connect with their customers in their own unique way. Take for e.g. a local apparel store in Mumbai by the name Carron. Way back in the 1990s, Carron gave loyalty cards to customers who shopped for a certain amount. The card carrier was eligible for discounts on their next purchase along with a host of other benefits including a special preview before their EOSS as well as timely updates of their new collection.

A PAGE FROM THE HISTORY OF LOYALTY PROGRAMS

The Grand Union Tea Company of New York became one of the first ever firms to issue tickets to customers in 1872, which could be exchanged for merchandise in its company catalogue.

From copper coins, came the advent of stamps. Green Shield stamps became one of the first retail loyalty programs. History of Loyalty Programs on the internet reveals that this particular initiative set the precedence for popular programs like Air Miles and Aeroplan that exist today.

Green Shield awarded stamps for purchases made at select retailers

which could then be redeemed for catalogue products.

The trend of stamp collection steered its way through the early 1900s as well but by then there was a host



of individual retailers too offering customised loyalty programs to their patrons in form of 'box tops'. Box tops were coupons that were printed directly onto product packages and these could be later redeemed for a host of rewards. The name that owes some credit here would be that of Betty Crocker.

Decades from then, another revolution happened in the history of Loyalty Programs with the advent of the Frequent Fliers launched by American Airlines. Launched in 1981, today this initiative by airlines has over 50 million members.

Overall, loyalty programs in the past were more about enticing the shopper with discounts so they would visit the store again and make a repeat purchase. National retail chains soon started picking up on the idea and in the recent past, the idea has snowballed turning into an essential sub-segment of the retail industry.

Shoppers Stop set the ball rolling with a pan-India loyalty program. First Citizen, their loyalty program has three levels and based on the card a shopper has, the privileges and rewards differ.

Food tech retailers have gone a step ahead and are offering instant gratification allowing their patrons to collect points. For example, Swiggy's Super program makes a patron eligible for instant discounts and free delivery. With an upfront fee charged (which again is offered on a discount mostly), the benefits begin rolling in. Similarly, meat delivery app Meatigo

offers instant cash back post the delivery of the order (which is within 90 minutes maximum from the time ordered) and then the icing on the cake comes when on crossing a certain bill amount, the customer is eligible for buying certain items for as low as ₹1!

Local stores like Sarvodaya in Dadar, Mumbai, pamper patrons with assured gifts on certain bill amounts – no points or cards required to claim gifts and rewards. Similarly, Osia Hyper Retail – which has branches in many states – has alluring offers for their patrons. All of their hypermarkets ensure that their loyal customers are made to feel like a part of one big large family. Sharing how customers are rewarded for their loyalty, **Dhirendra Gautam Chopra, Chief Managing Director – Osia Hyper Retail** says, "Our concept is based on offering lowest price deals 365 days of the

year and apart from that we reward our customers with a month's of shopping free if they shop at our hypermarket for 12 consecutive months. We also offer cash back vouchers where we offer discount to the customer on his next purchase."

Loyalty Programs by National Brands

With a 36 million customer base, Landmark's loyalty program – Landmark Rewards – is another prominent program where members can earn and spend points within all the Landmark Group brands in India, which includes Lifestyle, Home Centre, Max Fashion, Spar Hypermarkets, MelangeEBOs, Krispy Kreme and Fun City.

Vasanth Kumar – Managing Director, Lifestyle International Pvt. Ltd. says, "The Landmark Rewards is a rewards and benefits program aimed at providing





"Our concept is based on offering lowest price deals 365 days of the year and apart from that we reward our customers with a month's of shopping free if they shop at our hypermarket for 12 consecutive months"

- DHIRENDRA GAUTAM CHOPRA



"The Landmark Rewards is a rewards and benefits program aimed at providing loyalty benefits to all customers shopping at various formats of Landmark Group in India"

- VASANTH KUMAR



"Metro believes that loyalty can be built with only the finest quality of products, unmatched customer services and being generous in the way you reward customers"

- ALISHA MALIK



"The SUGAR Rewards Loyalty Program was introduced in 2016. The initial phase of our loyalty program involved the elementary system of giving our enrolled customers 'redeemable points on ordering'"

- KAUSHIK MUKHERJEE



"Our loyalty program members are the privileged few who get exclusive deals as well as early access to new products, exclusive content and invite to local events and other offerings"

- RIMA KIRTIKAR

loyalty benefits to all customers shopping at various formats of Landmark Group in India. The host of benefits both in-store and online include features such as - free enrolment, earn and spend points at all

the Landmark Group stores in India and online, personalised offers, exclusive store promotions, end of season sale preview, birthday bonus points and out of store offers."

Indian retailers - whether they are the national retail chains or local mom and pop stores, all of them seem to have mastered the art of winning over their patrons. Where the big names have at their disposal the logistics and bandwidth to offer a full fledged loyalty programs, one cannot overlook the local retail / kirana stores who ensure that they connect with their customers in their own unique way

Since its inception, Metro Shoes has been the undisputed leader in the footwear category with a record number of COCO stores across India. Metro initiated its loyalty program - which resonates the value of the brand - a few years ago.

Talking about the loyalty program, Alisha Malik, VP Marketing & E-Commerce, Metro Shoes, says, "Metro believes that loyalty can be built with only the finest quality of products, unmatched customer services and being generous in the way you reward customers. With these values, Metro Brands Ltd. has built a simple, yet generous points-based rewarding program for its key brands - Metro Shoes and Mochi. The loyalty program in Metro is called 'Club Metro' and Mochi is called 'My Mochi'."

Citing the key features of the program, she says, "Our program benefits include 4 percent reward points equivalent to Rs.4 for every ₹100 spent, birthday rewards and surprises, invite to exclusive previews, store launch, and new collections, special offers/rewards for premium customers and a dedicated loyalty customer support team." It is interesting to note that over 8 years, they have built a base of over 6 million loyalty members across all their brands. To accentuate the success of their program, she adds, "Our repeat ratio is more than 50 percent, which speaks of the success of our loyalty program."



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The business of beauty has come out of the closet too and forms an integral part of the retail industry. Malls across the country are home to several salons and stores selling beauty products. This makes it imperative to bring forth the work being undertaken by salons and beauty brands in building their loyalty programs. For e.g. Lakmé Salon's loyalty program has a whopping 7 lakh members. Called the Runway Rewards, the program allows its patrons to enjoy a gamut of offers, bonus reward points, happy hours and much more.

Pushkaraj Shenai, CEO, Lakmé Lever states, "The Runway Rewards Membership Program has something for every woman. To highlight a few - The Lakmé Salon app is perfect as it lets one book an appointment with the experts at just a click. Additional discounts and reward points are just the icing on the cake! The app is available on Google Play and App store. Making birthdays extra-special is the Birthday Treat benefit that gives our customers a 15 percent discount on their bill in the birthday month. We have also initiated the Happy Hours where the consumer can enjoy Happy Hours benefits from Monday to Thursday until 3 pm where every service is discounted up to 20 percent depending on the membership tier. As time goes by, earning reward points gets easier, as we give our customers many ways accumulate the points. Customers who reach the topmost "Showstopper" tier (the highest tier in the runway reward program) enjoy multiple privileges and also stands a chance to get invited to the Lakmé Fashion Week."



Moving over to understanding the dynamics of loyalty program of cosmetic brand SUGAR, it is enlightening to learn their journey from offering a basic loyalty program to moving ahead and redesigning the program making it engaging for patrons.

Encapsulating the journey of SUGAR



Rewards Loyalty Program, **Kaushik Mukherjee, Co-founder & COO - SUGAR Cosmetics** shares, "The SUGAR Rewards Loyalty Program was introduced in 2016. The initial phase of our loyalty program involved the elementary system of giving our enrolled customers 'redeemable points on ordering'. Being a start for the brand, we first experimented the traditional way of giving SUGAR points on signing up and on the total value of each order placed. These points were redeemable to unlock a discount code of a measured value which could be applied to the customer's subsequent purchase. Gaining more understanding about the program we realised that it was not just about giving discounts to customers but enhancing their engagement on the platform. Hence we decided to add valued yet simple ways for customers to gain more rewards. This was done through asking the customers to connect and engage with the brand on other social media platforms which also gave them timely updates about new launches, offers by the brand. There was also an option to add in your birth dates to be entitled to gifts and surprises from the brand and further referring SUGAR Rewards to other friends to share the gained value with them. We further used our re-marketing tools to communicate special exclusive offers, makeup trends and tips periodically solely for members of SUGAR Rewards."

Currently SUGAR Rewards engages almost 1 million active users, and this has helped the brand generate a value of almost ₹12.4 million.

What makes SUGAR's loyalty program special is the fact that they truly pamper their customers building a surprise factor on each step of their association with the brand. Mukherjee reveals,

"The rewards which don't just include discounts but also provide higher privilege

HOW BRANDS DESIGN LOYALTY PROGRAMS

– **PUSHKARAJ SHENAI**
CEO, LAKME LEVER



TARGETED CAMPAIGNS USING CUSTOMER DATA:

It is imperative that brands designs programs that suit the individual customers. Receiving random or irrelevant advertisements can quickly disillusion a customer and may even lead the customer to move away from a brand.

DIFFERENTIATE YOUR PROGRAM

With most beauty brands are offering loyalty rewards, it is important to differentiate your program from that of your competitors.

MAKE REWARDS TANGIBLE

Customers will quickly lose interest in a rewards program that makes it too difficult to redeem or if it cannot be customised as per their requirement. Beauty is something which is very personal and we at Lakmé Salon have kept this point on the topmost priority while designing the Runway Rewards program.

ACCESSIBILITY IS KEY

Your loyalty program should be accessible across a range of devices. With 62 percent of Millennials are shopping on their phone, your customers should also be able to access the program on mobile devices as well as traditional desktops.

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* As surveyed by PPF2 - Retail Consultant.



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and exclusivity like limited edition gifts, welcome gifts on entering a new tier, private sales and earning more points for the same purchase on higher levels. Lastly, the feature of gamification added to the program that unlocks access to additional points by liking, following and referring friends to SUGAR's social media platforms. This has increased consumer engagement on the program."

Where malls earlier were seen only as a one stop shop for people to shop, today they have become a destination in themselves where people actively visit malls not just to shop but also to unwind and spend their leisure time. Little wonder, each mall today has its own loyalty program place.

Mumbai's Viviana Mall's V Club loyalty program has been in existence for little over a year but in this time frame it has managed to garner over 80,000 active customers. **Rima Kirtikar, Sr. Vice President Marketing, Sheth Developers & Realtors (India) Ltd.** says, "Customer engagement numbers have improved with Viviana Mall witnessing 3x growth in terms of customer engagement /

has been a beneficial one in terms of brand's revenue and sales, attracting new customer and giving us a direct way to communicate to customers."

The Essentials of a Strong Loyalty Program

"What's in a name?" it is often said, but when it comes to naming a loyalty program, it means everything. A brand needs to establish an emotional connect of consumers with their loyalty program and hence the name must be well thought of. For example, Ayesha Accessories, a brand that has created a niche for itself in India for the range of accessories that it has, calls its loyalty program 'Ayesha Tribe'. A typical customer of the brand is someone who is looking at making a statement for herself with the accessories she wears, and the name simply fits in perfectly to make the consumer stand out from the crowd and a part of a special tribe that simply loves its accessories.

SUGAR Cosmetics' loyalty program too has an extremely well thought of name.

"Experience also taught us to always

Food tech retailers have gone a step ahead and are offering instant gratification allowing their patrons to collect points. For example, Swiggy's Super program makes a patron eligible for instant discounts and free delivery. With an upfront fee charged (which again is offered on a discount mostly), the benefits begin rolling in

rewards program and making it exclusive – adding prestige value to be a part of the highest tier. Tiered reward programs offer different rewards depending on which tier a customer is in. In order to progress to the next level, customers must pass a pre-determined milestone of their spending on the brand."

On the criterion to judge the success or failure of the loyalty program, Malik says, "If a retailer is able to 'wow' a customer and impress them with relevant engagements and can increase the stickiness to the brand with their loyalty program, then it is a successful loyalty program. If loyalty is equal to just collecting database and broadcasting messages, it is not very effective."

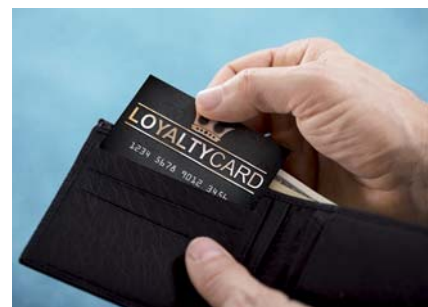
Points Vs Instant Gratification: What Works Better?

Where having an instant discount on an item purchased would no doubt add in excitement to the shopping experience of a customer, going by the trend, the customer today also wants prolonged pampering from the brand. If the customer has a



membership and points redemption. Our loyalty program members are the privileged few who get exclusive deals as well as early access to new products, exclusive content and invite to local events and other offerings. Some of the primary key features of The V Club include submitting bills through multiple platforms (website, The V Club Application, Microsite, QR Code) and availing full value vouchers. The program

keep updating and improving the perks for our loyal customers. In mid-2018 we introduced the 'tier based' loyalty program. The names of our tiers being inspired by the SUGAR customers journey with the brand, where first time users come in to 'Like' the product, slowly fall in 'Love' as they keep purchasing more, and then are in complete 'Lust' with the brand. Gamifying for us was a phenomenal way to engage the customers more with our



brand's loyalty card in her wallet, she may well want to ensure that the card serves some purpose in form of making her feel a part of the program at any given day – that could be perhaps by reminding her of add on points during her special days like birthday and anniversary etc. or allowing her to flash the card to beat the billing queue. Keeping this in mind, one cannot help but wonder on the best strategy to adopt.

Malik says, “There is no standard strategy of loyalty. One should define the brand objective to start a loyalty program. A points program which almost works like a cashback that can be utilized in the next purchase helps get repeat sales and increases walk-ins, while instant gratification helps push immediate sales.”

“While we have adopted the points-based program for our brands Metro Shoes and Mochi Shoes, the Crocs loyalty



program available in stores run by Metro brands Ltd, is a more ‘Gamified Rewards Program’. Instant gratification is a good strategy to piggyback on converting instant sales and should be amalgamated with your existing program benefits as a short-term move, not as a permanent program structure,” she further explains.

According to Kumar, “Loyalty programs should have a good mix of both. When objectives like driving annual spends, increasing annual visits and such have to be achieved, benefits accumulated over a period of time can help drive these objectives. Instant gratification benefits can help driving short term goals such as improving basket size, ticket size and categories purchased. However, in both the cases, the award of the rewards must be sooner than later, thereby ensuring a great customer experience.”

Mukherjee shares his views saying, “We have always seen the customer's likeliness to unlock their exclusive gifts



only after reaching a certain level of their loyalty program status. Customers are also more likely to add into their purchases, or repeat purchases in order to level up their loyalty program status and enjoy better perks. This trend has been noticed from the inception of our loyalty program and we agree that points accumulation, complemented with exciting gifts that await the consumers is something that works for the Indian audience. This also helps the brand create high consumer engagement to their platform.”

The Road Ahead

Ritu Chhadha, an avid shopper with one of the leading apparel brands shares her experience which is more of a disappointment stating, “As much as I simply adore the brand, I really think that the loyalty program they run needs to be shut down immediately. The moment I go to the billing counter, they ask for my number to add on to the points. On enquiring whether I am eligible for a discount or if I can redeem the points accumulated most often than not what I hear is either that the points have expired or that I haven't crossed the minimum slab where I can redeem the points. Well, even if it is ₹10, why should they have a problem if I wish to redeem the same? I find absolutely no value in the loyalty program they run.”

Like Chhadha there are umpteen Indian customers who seem to have literally given up on the loyalty programs run by

their favourite brands. Where brands are now working their way to ‘engage’ the customer through the loyalty program, the fact remains that the average Indian customer is more interested in seeing how much money they can save by being loyal to a particular brand and the kind of pampering in form of gifts and special discounts they are eligible for.

Kirtikar reiterates the point saying, “The key motive behind a loyalty program is to retain customers by rewarding them for their regular purchase behavior. Such loyalty programs are a tool to retain customers by giving them a solid motive to buy again from the particular brand and establishing habits. Keeping in mind the new age consumer they look for instant gratification be it points/rewards on credit cards, airlines, online shopping platforms, retail chain programs, there are many rewards programs that brands offer.”

Mukherjee agrees, aptly concluding the discussion saying, “A loyalty program usually gives customers access to free merchandise, rewards, coupons, and even exclusive previews of released products but all of these elements may not suffice for a business to retain ‘loyal’ consumers after a certain point of time. As businesses are now under constant pressure to meet customer expectations with exceptional experiences, they are required to look beyond the complex rewards systems and continue evolving their loyalty programs, strategies and technologies to offer tangible value which is something truly unique to customers.” **R**

GEMS, JEWELLERY, TEXTILES & APPAREL PRIORITY CATEGORIES FOR ALIBABA IN INDIA

– DENNY WANG, REGIONAL DIRECTOR, B2B BUSINESS



Alibaba.com established its India operations in 2008 and has since served millions of buyers and sellers. According to an analysis by the group, India ranks second in the top-20 buyer distribution list and first in the top-10 global seller distribution. Currently, Alibaba.com operates with a global network of 150 million registered members, connecting Indian SMEs with buyers across the world...

By Charu Lamba

Founded in 1999 as the first business of Alibaba Group, Alibaba.com is a leading wholesale marketplace for global trade committed to facilitating 'Global Buy, Global Sell.' Through the platform, millions of buyers and sellers across 200 countries and regions – trade agents, wholesalers, retailers, SMEs – can trade in over 40 major categories ranging from raw materials to component parts and even finished goods.

Alibaba.com established its India operations in 2008 and has since served millions of buyers and sellers. According to an analysis by the group, India ranks second in the top-20 buyer distribution list and first in the top-10 global seller distribution. Currently, Alibaba.com operates with a global network of 150 million registered members, connecting Indian SMEs with buyers across the world.

Alibaba plans to expand its Indian merchant-user base and create a powerful local e-commerce ecosystem for SMEs.

The focus on B2B in India is for businesses from India to do more for themselves outside of the local market. As a part of a deepening commitment towards India and in line with its partnership approach, the B2B platform, Alibaba.com, has introduced a successful reseller strategy in the country. By working with resellers, it's localising its approach in the Indian market. The brand believes that by going through resellers, it will be able to tap their resources, networks and knowledge in order to more, efficiently and serve a burgeoning Indian SME community.

Its key focus is to introduce Indian merchants to the world, starting with China and then Southeast Asia. It is bringing products from Indian SMEs and brands on its platform to consumers not only in India but in China and then SE Asia.

In a freewheeling chat with IMAGES Retail, **Denny Wang, Regional Director, B2B Business, South Asia, Alibaba.com** explains how Alibaba is helping retailers in India grow.



*Excerpts from the interview...***The Indian e-commerce market is dominated by players like Amazon and Flipkart. What steps is Alibaba taking get a sizeable share of the Indian market pie?**

Alibaba.com is the world's leading B2B e-commerce platform. In line with the vision of the group 'to make it easy to do business anywhere', our proposition is to enable local enterprises –especially SMEs – to reach global buyers through the platform. Today, we are present in over 200 countries and regions with more than 150 million registered users and over 10 million active buyers. The platform has over 5,900 product categories ranging from consumer electronics to machinery, food & beverages, jewellery and apparel.

Apart from enabling local businesses to reach out to global audiences, we drive local initiatives to increase competitiveness of our members. These programs, apart from educating merchants about the platform's proposition, give them insights into the industry, buyer trends, etc. enabling them to take their businesses to global audiences by leveraging the power of digital economy.

What are the criteria for selecting retailers?

Alibaba.com is open to all, whether they are manufacturers, trading companies, wholesalers, entrepreneurs or MNCs.

“ A UNIQUE REAL-TIME TRANSLATION FUNCTION IS PROVIDED SUPPORTING MULTIPLE LANGUAGES THAT ALLOWS BUYERS AND SUPPLIERS TO CHAT ONLINE IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGES. THE PLATFORM ALSO PROVIDES ANALYTICS TOOLS THAT ALLOW FOR SELLERS TO TRACK THEIR SALES PERFORMANCE, INDUSTRY TRENDS, AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR SO THEY CAN FORMULATE AND IMPLEMENT THE RIGHT STRATEGY ”

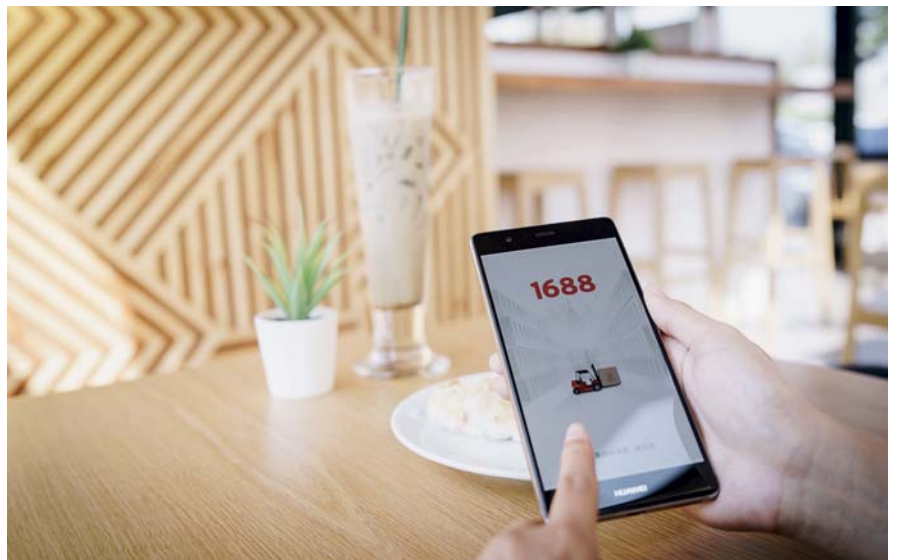
We do not set out any specific criteria for selection. Whether businesses can make good use of the platform is dependent on their mindset, manufacturing or trading abilities and export readiness.

What strategies is Alibaba adopting to promote Indian retailers on a global scale?

Our objective is to empower Indian SMEs broaden their markets globally to do business. Connecting local businesses to

Some interesting case studies that have emerged in this sector on the platform are:

DVN Traders: The Mumbai-based company has been in operation since 1975, but it was only in 2006 that it ventured into the export market and boomed—the key to this was e-commerce. Alibaba.com has helped the company grow their business from one factory to seven factories and expanded its customer network to cover the USA, Europe and Australia.



Nopparat Khokhong / Shutterstock.com

the largest section of buyers globally is truly our value proposition and we work towards creating an ecosystem that can help these SMEs handle various aspects of participating in global markets and doing the business with ease. We have various channel partners in the market, who besides onboarding the sellers also work with them on how best to leverage the platform and do business. We also regularly conduct workshops and training programs for our sellers that can aid them in better understanding of the potential of e-commerce, engaging with international buyers, and more.

Share some case studies of Indian retailers who have grown globally with Alibaba's assistance.

While there are various cases of successful merchants from India on the platform, we have identified the Gems & Jewellery sector as a strong growth segment.

Shri Ashapura Jewelers: Having registered with Alibaba.com in 2014, the company from Jaipur is now running a 100 percent export business with the help of the platform. What started as a small startup is now the largest exporters of silver jewellery having a customer base in over 40 countries across the world.

Rana Silver & Arts: Founded in 2002, the company from Jaipur has been doing well in the domestic market until Alibaba.com showed them the way to reach a global audience. Today 80-90 percent of Rana Silver & Arts' export business comes from Alibaba.com.

Lavie International Inc.: The Jaipur-based Company manufactures and exports a wide range of (around 925) silver jewellery and is one of the fastest growing exporters of gems. With the help of Alibaba.com, they are able to supply their

products to over 15 countries across the globe including Spain, Hong Kong, Russia, France, Germany etc. and have seen a 40 percent business growth last year.

What benefits do retailers get working with Alibaba?

There's a three-fold value proposition:

Business Opportunities - Organisations can establish a verified online presence to work with potential partners. They then gain access to a variety of tools and channels that match buyers and sellers including the ability to facilitate direct communication anytime and anywhere.

Transactions and Fulfilment - To facilitate online trade, the platform has a range of payments and logistics services making it easier to partake in cross-border trade. In addition, there are inspection services provided to give buyers peace of mind as the transactions progress. Finally, there are export services that include customs clearance, foreign exchange, tax refund, and trade financing made available to eligible suppliers which lower their barriers to trade through the platform.

Business Management - The platform provides analytics tools that allow sellers to track their sales performance, industry trends, and consumer behavior so they can formulate and implement the right strategy.

Elaborate on the services that Alibaba is offering retailers?

ALIBABA FACTS: DID YOU KNOW?

Registered Members:

150 million+

Active Buyers:

10 million+

Products:

170 million+

Active Inquiries Per Day:

300,000+

Operating in
over 200+
countries/ regions

16
Real-Time Chat Translation
Languages

Industries:

40+

Product Categories:

5,900+

There are a variety of services that we as a platform offer to the sellers today. Through Alibaba.com, sellers can establish a verified online presence to work with potential partners. They then gain access to a variety of tools and channels that match buyers and sellers including the ability to facilitate direct communication anytime and anywhere.

A unique real-time translation function is provided supporting multiple languages

that allows buyers and suppliers to chat online in their own languages. The platform also provides analytics tools that allow for sellers to track their sales performance, industry trends, and consumer behavior so they can formulate and implement the right strategy.

For buyers, the platform offers a range of payments and logistics services for transactions with qualified suppliers, making it easier to partake in cross-border trade. We also offer an image-based search function that allows buyers to snap or upload a photo of a product they like and use that picture to instantly find similar products ready to be sourced on Alibaba.com. The platform has a digital feature that brings updates about the latest trade shows from around the world and highlights exhibitors from Alibaba.com.

Which category (apparel, beauty, food etc.) you are focusing on and why?

While there is a variety of products listed from India, keeping in mind the biggest buyer trends we have chosen to focus on Gems and jewellery and textiles and apparel as priority categories for the market.

Both these sectors have had a strong export focus and we have seen a huge demand for these categories emerging from various regions across the world.


Highlight some features on the platform for buyers and sellers.

Real-time Translation: Real-time translation function supporting multiple languages that allows buyers and suppliers to chat online in their own languages.

Source Now: An image-based search function that allows buyers to snap or upload a photo of a product they like and use that picture to instantly find similar products ready to be sourced on Alibaba.com.

Trade Shows: A digital feature that brings updates about the latest trade shows from around the world and highlights exhibitors from Alibaba.com.

Global Logistics: Transparent and competitively priced cross-border logistics solutions with online shipment tracking and guaranteed service delivery.

Pay Later: A small-loan program that allows eligible buyers to finance their orders for up to six months. 



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Imagine walking into a store, choosing a product, standing in a long line to pay and then getting into an argument with a cashier.

Now, imagine walking into a store and getting personalised attention, choosing products that are customised to your needs and finally no queues while checking yourself out in a frictionless environment. Which one would you visit again? The answer is obvious.

There is a world of opportunity for brands to cash in on, expanding on the information they have and potentially changing the entire experience for shoppers. While e-commerce retailers are working towards seamless payment gateways complete with last minute customised offers, there is an even bigger opportunity for brick-and-mortar retailers here.

Though offline stores are still far ahead in terms of generating revenue as compared to e-commerce, online sales are growing at a much faster rate than sales in physical stores. In USA, the online sale still accounts for 11.1 percent of the total sales, whereas in India the percentage is even lower. With the majority of online growth driven by pure-play e-commerce brands, most retailers still rely more on in-store purchases than online sales. Services like self-checkout and cashier-less payment systems then make a huge impact here. Couple this technology – the buzzword for today’s Millennial shopper – with loyalty programs and traditional retailers have a winning system.



SCAN & GO: SEAMLESS PAYMENTS, SELF-CHECKOUTS DISRUPT CONSUMER EXPERIENCE

With the majority of online growth driven by pure-play e-commerce brands, most retailers still rely more on in-store purchases than online sales. Services like self-checkout and cashier-less payment systems then make a huge impact here. Couple this technology – the buzzword for today’s Millennial shopper – with loyalty programs and traditional retailers have a winning system...

By IMAGES Retail Bureau





MOBILE PAYMENTS

According to consulting firm Boston Retail Partners, 14 percent of retailers currently have a mobile scan-and-pay system installed and 39 percent plan to install one within the next two years.

The firm also found in a recent survey that three-quarters of digital consumers aged 18 to 37 say they're more likely to choose a store with self-checkout over one that doesn't, while 67 percent said they would do the same for a store that offers mobile scan-and-go.



Out' technologies, will be used by over 32 million shoppers by 2023; driving higher engagement.

In a recent study titled '11th Annual Global Shopper Study', Zebra Technologies Corporation identified diverging expectations on the impact of automation between retailers and store associates. According to the study, nearly 80 percent of retail decision-makers – compared to 49 percent of store associates – agree that staff checkout areas are becoming less necessary due to new technologies that can automate checkout. It further stated that more than one-half of retail decision-makers (52 percent) are converting points-of-sale i.e. their POS space to self-checkout and 62 percent are transforming it for online order pickup.

Another report by Global Market Insights, Inc. states that self-checkout systems market size is set to exceed US \$ 4 billion by 2024. Growing supermarket penetration is driving the self-checkout systems market growth. The industry growth can be attributed to the presence of a large number of supermarkets, department stores, hypermarkets, home improvement stores, and other retail chains in North America and Europe. Several large retail chains are constantly upgrading and leveraging self-checkout technology to best meet customer needs. For example, McDonalds updated over 500 restaurants in 2016 with mobile payment options, self-order kiosks, and an updated interior design and table service. In the U.S., the retail self-checkout market is highly competitive with vendors focusing on providing differentiated and innovative products along with top-notch after-sales services.

The self-checkout systems market has seen a shift from traditional kiosks to cashless systems, leading to the evolution of unstaffed store concepts. In China, several consumers have been using mobile payment apps, such as WeChat Pay (Tencent) and Alipay, which are the two most popular and prominent mobile payment services in the country. According to the People's Bank of China, in 2016, mobile payment transactions totaled 25.7 billion, with a transaction volume of about US \$ 20 trillion. The mobile payment market in China is essentially a duopoly with Tencent and Alibaba holding almost 90 percent of the



Determining Consumer Needs

Brick-and-mortar has to be fully focused on engaging and entertaining customers or lose them to competition, either offline or online. The business of retail today is all about gauging what the customer expects from a brand. In-store services and communication play a very significant role in increasing footfalls in stores. With the aid of technology, retailers are implementing and adding so much to their service quotient – self / cashier-less checkout systems, PoS innovations, VR and AR solutions, loyalty programs, Cash on Delivery, Card on Delivery, same day delivery and expanding mobile payments

to customer loyalty programs are some trends that have picked up recently and are being used extensively by reputed brands.

Also, since the future of retail includes a combination of online and offline, it's not enough to deliver generic customer experiences. Retailers need to strive hard to meet consumer expectations with relevant and personalised solutions. Winning their business means understanding their unique preferences and behaviors and shaping marketing messages and offers to these preferences.

Research & Impact

A new report from Juniper Research forecasts that retail spend at frictionless payment stores like Amazon Go will grow from an estimated US\$ 253 million in 2018 to over US\$ 45 billion by 2023. Juniper expects most of these transactions to be in convenience and general stores, with an average transaction value around US\$ 30 per visit throughout the forecast period.

The new report, Future In-Store Retail Technologies: Adoption, Implementation & Strategy 2018-2023, also found that self-scanning apps, an alternative to 'Just Walk



mobile payment market share, followed by Chinese card network UnionPay. Manufacturers in the industry are working toward creating unique solutions to meet the needs of the Chinese market such as mobile payments and scan & go concepts. The intensifying price competition in the region can be attributed to the presence of a large number of suppliers in China.

While Wi-Fi will continue to remain the biggest engagement point for customers, Juniper expects smart checkout apps to act as gateways to technologies like Bluetooth beacons and augmented reality. The development of virtualized beacons, where an antenna array simulates the presence of multiple beacons, will increase revenues for beacon manufacturers. These revenues will grow at an average annual growth of 49 percent, reaching over US\$ 1.5 billion by 2023; beacon shipments will only grow at 21.5 percent per annum.

Why Experiential Retail?

A lot has been spoken about customer experience and it still continues to generate interest for both consumers and retailers. As needs and demands vary from customer to customer, there cannot be a standard definition for CX. Retailers who expect shoppers to continue chasing the quickest queue or undertake the frenzied race of packing to keep up with the cashier's pace, will fail to meet the growing expectations of the in-store experience and will push them to find alternatives.

With a focus on enabling superior shopper experiences, retailers re-imagine the store as the heart of the retail experience, helping in-store shopping remain a relevant and meaningful part of the overall business strategy. One of the first things that comes to mind regarding store transformation is the self-checkout. And while a robust self-checkout solution is certainly a solid foundation from which

A robust self-checkout solution is certainly a solid foundation from which to start building an optimal front-end, it's only the beginning of the journey

to start building an optimal front-end, it's only the beginning of the journey.

Anil Menon, General Manager- IT, Tata Starbucks explains, "Modern-day customers prefer multiple options for shopping. They may walk-in to stores or simply order online. Giving them an option of click and collect will be adding to their shopping experience. The customers can shop online and drop in at the store to collect products at a time convenient to them. Once again, we are aiming to provide a quick and seamless checkout process."

Being Human has a strong offline presence across the country. The brand has ensured it has a common POS across its stores including their franchise stores. Manish Mandhana, Managing Director, Mandhana Industries says, "As and when we have updates from our partner (POS service provider), we make sure that those updates are implemented across all Being Human Clothing stores. Currently, we are working on the mobile POS concept and the same is scheduled to be rolled out soon. Planning and mapping play a key role to ensure that the entire checkout process is swift. At Being Human Clothing, we ensure that checkout processes are done within a minute."

Alisha Malik, Vice President, e-Commerce, Metro Brands Limited adds, "We have an ETP POS system across all our stores. This is in the process of being upgraded to get a near to real-time view of store inventory. It involves faster updates and the ability to fulfill Omnichannel orders without toggling between screens." But the transition wasn't an easy one. To hear it

from Malik, "When we first transitioned from our legacy POS to an enterprise POS we did face certain challenges. However, this was primarily due to a gap in our understanding of the capabilities of the POS versus our expectations of what features we would like a POS to have. Currently, thanks to our excellent IT team, we seem to be progressing smoothly on this journey."

Revealing the salient features of the POS in their retail stores, **Dhiraj Agarwal, Chief Executive Officer & Co-Founder, Campus Sutra** shares, "It's most important feature is providing auto-queuing – that is when a piece is sold, information is sent to the warehouse. Dispatch and replenishment are done the very next day since it is integrated with our warehouse inventory. The POS also offers integration with our Omnichannel systems."

Nikhil Gupta, Founder & Director, All In Stores explains, "We have easy-to-use POS system and it was never a challenge to train the staff. It is user-friendly, fast billing point of sale software, and it also provides friendly customer support. Recently we got 'Best Quality Customer Service Enabler Award' for their excellent services. We keep on introducing new features in every two or three months to improve the experience. With these features, on an average, the checkout procedure takes a minute, but it also depends on a number of items purchased by the customer. We realise the importance expedient checkout process and to address this we have to express lane to shorten wait times. Effective barcode

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reader and saving customer information for future to save time are some of the steps that are taken to make check-out process smooth and quick.

Benefits

Despite having user interface problems, there are more benefits associated with the self-checkout systems, the top one being that they are preferred by Millennials and tech-savvy shoppers. There are shorter queues, no cashier to haggle with, an easy touchscreen process and so people overlook the challenges and prefer to use self-checkout lanes. Some of the main benefits of using them are:

Quick and Convenient: Self-checkout is a fast and quick service and saves a lot of time. This is the most prominent benefit of cashier-less and Self-Checkout service.

No Queue: There is no queue at all. Compared to the regular checkout lanes, the self-checkout line is usually very short or nonexistent.

Efficient: For new beginners and first time users, it may be a time consuming process but once familiar, the self-checkout process is efficient and can be less of a hassle. It also eliminates manual errors.

Control: One can decide whether or not to scan or return an item without the fear of annoying the cashier through your indecisiveness.

Privacy: Self-Checkout processes help the consumer to shop and leave without being judged or interrupted. No one can judge the buyer by the purchase he or she makes.

Reduce Staff Stress: Customers handling payment relieve store executives of handling cash while freeing them up to focus on other tasks like bagging purchased products and paying more attention to consumers.

Challenges

However, there are some customers who deliberately avoid the self-service checkout method, opting for a more traditional shopping experience, complete with human interaction. The key reasons are:

The Indian retail scenario has been the stage for many innovative tactics – as brick-and-mortar retailers, across a gamut of categories, strive to stay relevant while online retailers struggle to outlive the ‘valuation euphoria’ to actually drive business value

Price Discrepancies: There are certain cases, when the price mentioned on the product, is not the same as the price listed in the system. There are cases of outdated prices which need to be checked manually. In this case, one has to either call a store associate to make the correction or continue the checkout process, or then take your receipt to customer service for a refund.

Some Items won't Scan: There are ways to manually enter a bar code for an item that isn't able to be scanned, but many users either don't know how or don't have access to this method. If an item doesn't scan, often the only answer is to call for help. This means waiting for an associate to come and enter the bar code for you, which causes a delay for you and those waiting in line behind you.

Split Payments: In a cashier-controlled lane, it's easy to split the payment - for example, part cash and part card. This option often isn't available in self-service lanes, which require a single payment for the entire order.

Omnichannel: The Middle Path

The Indian retail scenario has been the stage for many innovative tactics – as brick-and-mortar retailers, across a gamut of categories, strive to stay relevant while online retailers struggle to outlive the ‘valuation euphoria’ to actually drive business value. Yes, the verdict is clear – retailers, both offline and online have to adapt or perish and not responding is not an option, but the key is to tap into consumer needs and behaviours which



transcend the online/ offline platform debate.

Linking the data helps marketers analyze how consumers move through the funnel and reach them on their preferred channels and devices. Multi-touch attribution can also provide insight into which granular-level tactics, such as publisher, placement, creative and keyword, drive online and offline sales. Since this insight is produced in near-real-time, retailers can capitalize on opportunities to drive engagement and influence purchase decisions at each stage in the consumer journey.

Ultimately, success will depend on retailers' ability to create optimal customer experiences. It's not a question of online or offline, but how a brand can best combine and leverage both mediums to meet the ever-changing needs of the modern consumer. With a true understanding of their customer and the tactics that influence their decision to buy, marketers can deliver a successful Omnichannel experience that wins over new customers and keeps existing ones coming back for more.



Intelligent apparel

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Stain Repellent Anti-Odour

Here is the list of retailers and the innovations (Self check out, cashier-less payment, POS innovations, magic mirrors, loyalty programs, Cash on Delivery, Card on Deliver, VR etc) introduced:

NATIONAL: RETAIL WITH SELF CHECK OUTS AND BEYOND

DECATHLON

The new 3,000 sq ft. the Decathlon store in Noida has redefined the way people buy sportswear through its highly involving and experience-centred stores. At its newly launched store in a DLF Mall, Noida, the brand banks upon digital services such as self-checkout counter, scan and pay app for billing to improve the buying experience.

“With Decathlon Scan & Go, customers can simply scan and pay for items using their smartphone, automatically disabling the RFID security tag to leave them free to exit the store without any need to queue or wait at the checkout,” explains **Sylvain Deschamps, City Sports Leader, Decathlon Noida**. Eliminating the need for queuing has been one of the key competitive advantages driving the success of online retail over the last decade. The store has dedicated sections for women, men, children and teenagers. Its dedicated space for fitness aficionados adds another dimension to this outlet, while the community space provides

customers an opportunity to practice their favourite fitness activities – be it augmented reality golf, simulator zone or skating rink. It is nothing less than a sportsman's paradise offering 50 sports and more than 5,000 sports products under one roof.

Apart from the self check out services, the store also has:

Digital Screens: The digital screens highlight the sporty story of the employees of Decathlon. The brand hires only sportsperson as its employees.

Augmented Reality Golf: The brand has brought the fun of playing golf inside its store by introducing augmented reality golf. It gives the same pleasure of playing golf as in the golf course.

Activity Areas: The store has dedicated areas for various sports activities like Basketball, Cricket and even an elevated bridge to check the grip of trekking shoes.



Community Area: The consumers can get engaged in various discussions related to sports along with participating in activities like Zumba, Hula Hoop, Football Freestyle and Rep wars to name a few.

Product Story: Highlights the technicality of the products, its usage and durability along with the price.

Currently, it has already been operating around 12 outlets in NCR and 70 outlets across India.

SPAR HYPERMARKET

SPAR has always been to be a hypermarket that is known for value and differentiation.

SPAR Hypermarkets' customers are family consumption groups with both value as well as aspirational needs. They range from the affluent segments to the pure value-seeking segments. The majority of customers belong to the 25+ age group. There is a healthy mix of demographics and age groups that visit the stores.

SPAR India has been at the forefront of innovation. SPAR's true innovation has been the Digital Kiosk which has been installed in one of the biggest technology parks – Manyata Tech Park in Bengaluru and has been successful in delivering a unique and easy shopping experience. The Digital Kiosk has a simple and easy to use shopping touch screens through which a customer can access the complete virtual

hypermarket and order and get same day delivery. Located in one of the largest tech parks in Bangalore, the first digital kiosk has been a great hit.

Apart from that the brand has introduced:

Self-assist Kiosks: Installed at key locations in-store to help customers find



products with ease.

Self-Checkout Kiosks: Where customers can pay their own bills without hassle.

Design Your Home Studio: Customers can mix and match home décor products virtually and visualize how it would look in their home.

Kids' Pad: Entertains kids with interesting games and interactive displays.

Energy Management: SPAR monitors and tracks electricity consumption of equipment with a tracking system.

Shop Floor Assistance Mobility App: Provides easy and quick information on stock availability.

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LIFESTYLE

With technological advancements, shopping experience has greatly evolved and Lifestyle, as a progressive retailer, has embraced many of these progressions to further enhance customer experience.

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

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

"The other innovations that we have introduced include our Fitting Room Assistance program that has emerged from our insights into our customer shopping behaviour, allows for size retrieval with the help of technology. For our e-commerce business, we have introduced visual search and enabled

voice-based search on our apps which has helped creating a more personalised and convenient shopping experience," he adds.

Innovation, today, is the tool that allows brands to ensure a frictionless journey from discovery to purchase for the customer. And Lifestyle is no far behind.



"We have introduced **'Click & Collect'** – an Omnichannel initiative that allows customers to order online and collect merchandise from a Lifestyle store of their choice. Our in-store **Endless-Aisle** initiative helps a customer to find her missing size on our online channel," he further elaborates.

Several of initiatives that the brand has taken are technological solutions to real customer problems which they discovered

through their interaction with customers as well as staff. Using this feedback, they have created simple yet impactful solutions leveraging technology. These have led to positive impact on their overall customer experience and helped increase engagement with the brand.

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

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

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

HYPERCITY

Supermarket chain HyperCity has unveiled a brand new type of retail store in India – self check-out, cashier-less stores. These two stores are located in Infosys' Hyderabad campuses. While the stores are not fully unmanned – some customer support and fulfilment staff are on the premises – customers are expected to check out themselves, shortening their shopping time since they don't have to stand in queues to be billed.

The checkout process is automated via the Perpule iPay app. Customers can scan barcodes on products as they shop, generate an invoice and pay,

and leave. Payment options include debit/credit cards, net banking, mobile wallets and even UPI.

Also, as of now, following payment one needs to take the items bought over to a weighing machine, which has a camera fixed to it to verify that the customer is only taking the items paid for. However, this works only if the number of items are five or less. For larger purchases, a staff member does a physical verification.

The app supports multiple digital payment gateways and cards for self-checkout, including debit card, net banking, e-wallets and UPI systems.





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Distribution Redefined

ROADSTER GO

Myntra successfully launched a new store for Roadster – one of the most popular and leading outdoor lifestyle brands in the country. Called 'Roadster Go', the offline store is located at Vega City Mall in Bengaluru and inherits the legacy of brand Roadster's hi-tech fashion Omnichannel experience, which is the first of its kind in the country.

The first ever 'Roadster Go' store has been launched at Mantri Mall in Malleshwaram in 2018, introducing visitors to a slew of technological innovations to enhance customers shopping experience and bringing online and offline experiences under one roof. Spread across an area of 3,200 sq. ft., the store is the brand's biggest yet. As a

100 percent RFID (Radio-frequency identification) enabled store, shoppers can pick up their favourite products without any assistance, discover **real time online prices** and do a **self-checkout** in 30 seconds, making it smarter, faster and seamless.

The RFID enabled digital screens at the store offer shoppers detailed information about a particular product when held up against it; shoppers discover all the product features on models wearing them (studio images) including fabric, washes, suitability to body type, color matching, availability of size and more. Customers buy all the products at real time online prices which they discover on the digital screen when they hold the product up

against it. They also initiate a 30-second self-checkout by placing all the products in the RFID tray which captures product details and display the bill on the screen, which is paid using a debit/ credit card,



Roadster, one of India's leading casual outdoorsy lifestyle brands, has announced the launch of Augmented Reality Tees (AR Tees) or the talking tees. With this launch, Roadster marries fashion, design and technology, offering shoppers a set of t-shirts that brings their roadster visual to life. This new range has been developed inhouse by Myntra's own Innovation Labs and is set to take the level of Innovation in fashion to the next level.

Although talking tees appear as normal graphic tees, it has in it, a readable AR code that the Myntra app can read and bring the graphic to life. Viewers get a taste of the concept through sounds and visuals of being on the road, with each graphic design bringing to life, the brand's philosophy of hitting the road and creating experiences through a simple shake of the phone, or by aiming the device at the AR reader on the shirt.

From an experienced wanderer, to a soulful camper, the limited edition collectible is for everyone who loves their tech-grease, for those who love to stay in trend and certainly for all those who like to hit the road. The tees are 100 percent cotton, with 6 different AR stories to collect with each design and priced at Rs 999. The AR experience is only available on Android for now.

upon confirmation, eliminating the need for scanning individual products or removing security tags from each garment.

Shoppers experience all these functions and more, requiring no intervention from staff at the outlet, unless requested for.

"Roadster has shown how fashion and technology, when integrated, create unique experiences that take offline shopping to a new level. As a pioneer in Omnichannel fashion, Myntra is committed to strengthening its offline presence through a franchise model and offer new experiences to engage customers and make shopping fast and seamless through technology," **Amar Nagaram, Head, Myntra Jabong**, says.

METRO SHOES

Metro Shoes has been delighting customers with its footwear range, but it also needs to be complimented for the way the check-outs are taken care of where the wait time is not only negligible, but it offers a fantastic human touch with the goodness of technology seamlessly weaved in. Metro Shoes has ETP POS system across all our stores. This is in the process of being upgraded to get a near to real time view of store inventory. It involves faster updates and the ability to fulfill Omnichannel orders without

toggling between screens.

At any given point of time, the salesman accompanies the shopper to the cash counter and the person behind the till effortlessly bills the customer without bombarding him with plethora of options and information on loyalty points and other reward programs. And considering the brand launched itself much before the advent of internet in India, it has not failed to keep up with the ever-changing dynamics of technology.

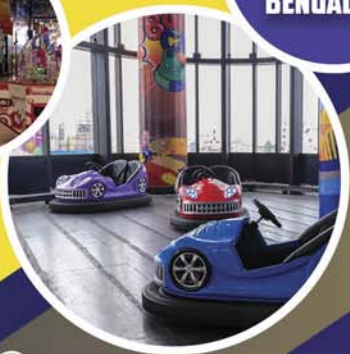
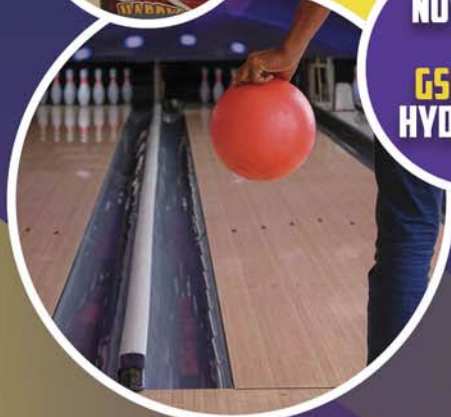




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GLOBAL: RETAIL WITH SELF CHECK OUTS AND BEYOND

AMAZON GO: REVOLUTIONIZING CHECKOUT

Adding more to cashier-less and self check outs, Amazon has gone one step ahead than the rest. Amazon Go is a new retail concept store with no cashiers. Launched in Amazon's hometown, Seattle, customers can fill their shopping carts in Amazon Go and walk out – with the costs tallied up and billed on their accounts with the US online giant.

Customers use an app called 'Go' to enter the store. Then Amazon's 'Just Walk Out' technology automatically detects when products are taken from or returned to the shelves and keeps track of them in a virtual cart.

When consumers are done shopping, they can just leave the store. Shortly after, the company will charge the consumer's

Amazon account and send them a receipt.

According to Amazon Go's webpage, the app uses the same types of technologies used in self-driving cars: computer vision, sensor fusion, and deep learning. All one needs to use the store is an Amazon account, a supported smartphone, and the free Amazon Go app.

In a move that could revolutionise the way we buy groceries, Amazon opens its first supermarket without checkouts – human or self-service – to shoppers. Amazon Go, in Seattle in the US, uses an array of ceiling-mounted cameras to identify each customer and track what items they select, eliminating the need for billing. Purchases are billed to customers' credit cards when they leave the store.



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Before entering, shoppers must scan the Amazon Go smartphone app. Sensors on the shelves add items to the bill as customers pick them up – and deletes any they put back.

AUCHAN

Auchan, one of France's leading retail groups, has opened several shops without checkout counters in China. "The operation of Auchan Minute is very simple and intuitive. To enter, the customer uses the application WeChat. At the entrance, it scans a code that opens him the doors of this automated shop and identifies it," Xinhua news agency quoted Auchan as saying in a statement.

After scanning the products, they are automatically added to a virtual cart. The customer takes the products after paying them via Wechat Pay or AliPay

and validating them by the mobile, the company added.

Auchan is set to introduce self-checkout at seven locations in Hungary this year, with the rest of stores to follow in 2020. A self-checkout system at the Óbuda Auchan started operations in July. The company says it will make shopping more convenient as well as faster. Self-checkout was first introduced at the Budakalász Auchan, with the Óbuda outlet following suit after a one-month test period. By the end of 2019, the stores in Budaörs, Dunakeszi, Maglód, Soroksár,



Irina_Kutlikova / Shutterstock.com

and Albertfalva will also receive the new self-checkout system.

ZARA

Zara introduced self-checkout kiosks in the store to ease the pain of standing in long queues for billing. Customers can checkout on their own and make the payment just by following a few simple steps.

Zara's new two-storey shop, at Westfield Stratford City is one major example of it. The store has a dedicated area for the purchase and collection of online orders on the first floor, in addition to the usual sections for women's, men's and kids' lines. This online area features two automated online order collection points, serviced by

a concealed area that can handle 2,400 orders simultaneously.

Shoppers scan QR or PIN codes they receive when they place orders online. Behind the pick-up point, a robotic arm collects trays and organises the packages optimally according to their size, and delivers orders in seconds.

There is a self-checkout area with a system that automatically identifies products being purchased. Zara staff with iPads will also be able to accept payments. The store has a fully open entrance on the ground floor, with no glass.



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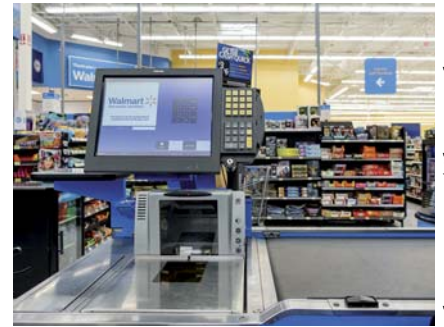
WALMART

Walmart InHome Delivery is a new service designed to help customers save time and offer yet another convenient choice for grocery shopping. The service does so by delivering groceries even when customers can't be home. Here's how it works:

- Customers place a grocery order and then select InHome Delivery and a delivery day at checkout
- Customers can then go about their days

while a Walmart associate takes care of their grocery shopping for them – from food aisle to fridge

- At the time of delivery, associates will use smart entry technology and a proprietary, wearable camera to access the customer's home – allowing customers to control access into their homes and giving them the ability to watch the deliveries remotely



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LOYALTY PROGRAMS: OFFLINE STORES

Loyalty programs are structured marketing strategies designed by merchants to encourage customers to continue to shop at or use the services associated and provided by them in each and every category. These programs exist covering most types of commerce, each one having varying features and rewards-schemes.

Brands with Unique Loyalty Programs and Retail Store Experiences

FABINDIA

fabindia Experience Centres house a **FabCafé** and an **Interior Design Studio**, in addition to its signature offerings that includes daily wear and occasion wear for women, men and kids, accessories, home and lifestyle products, personal care and organic foods.

Speaking about fabCafé, **Viney Singh, Managing Director, fabindia**, says, "It primarily focuses on bringing a nutritious menu highlighting India's diverse cuisine with a wide array of dishes representing various parts of the country."



Extending the focus on health and well-being, the Experience Centre has a designated space for Organic India's wellness store.

The wellness centre allows customers to interact with trained consultants on

various aspects of health, lifestyle and well-being, he said.

The Interior Design Studio provides a range of services such as consultancy on layouts, mapping spaces, product customisation and colour scheme coordination, among other things.

HUMMEL

To combat the competition from other players in the same category including brands like Nike, Puma, adidas and Under Armour, hummel offers a unique store experiences to its customers in India.

"Our mono-store has to create a customer experience. It has to offer something else that customers cannot get online or at MBOs. It has to be a destination that attracts and excites the customers," says **Henrik Svenning, Chief Commercial Officer, hummel**.

The brand's Amritsar store has an **anti-gravity photo-booth** where customers can get themselves clicked and take the 3D prints of the photographs.

In Chennai, the brand has a dedicated **yoga zone** where a local yoga trainer gives free of cost yoga classes to customers over weekends.

The Bengaluru store, which houses the premium collection hummel HIVE, boasts of a **Chill Zone** comprising of bean bags, boombox, library and a lot more.

"As hummel is a relatively new brand



in India, we want our stores to speak out loud about what we are offering and what is our positioning. We have plans to create an engagement zone in every store. In India, our positioning is as a sports lifestyle brand and we want all this to be communicated in our visual merchandising when customers enter the store. We are planning to marry tech with the stores and offer 3D and AR solutions," he states.

To hummel, creating retail in a way that expresses the brand's identity and ethics, is extremely important.

WACOAL

'Fit and comfort' of the product is considered to be the biggest USP of Wacoal. The brand has its own manufacturing units all over the world



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where it produces over 80 percent of their designs. It achieves high quality and high performance with the balanced mix of their own production units and research undertaken by Wacoal's Human Science Research Centre. This is their biggest strength that differentiates them from other brands. Instead of pursuing glamor, it pursues excellent supportability with unique materials and designs based on the research and development.



"We are all set to develop exclusive merchandise for the Indian market and plan to expand this in the coming years," says **Tomoyasu Ito, Representative Director, President and Corporate Officer of Wacoal Corp.**

"Apart from this, in Japan, we are in the process of placing 3D high-tech machines which will help women understand the exact sizes that they should buy. And if the experiment goes successful then we will be soon launching this technology in all our stores," he adds.

TANISHQ

Tanishq has taken one step further to be more accessible to its customers by launching into the **Augmented Reality experience** at the Bengaluru and Delhi airports. For the first time in India, a



jewellery brand has done an Augmented Reality/ Hybrid Reality (combination of physical space Augmented Reality) campaign at an airport to engage with a large audience at a completely new level.

With this technological advancement, customers had the option of "Try and Buy"; trying out the jewellery virtually looking at the AR screen.

Tanishq implemented Augmented Reality and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to let consumers virtually try on the jewellery in real time, without actually having to wear them.

Sharing her thoughts on the launch of AR experience, **Deepika Tewari, Associate Vice President, Marketing, Jewellery Division at Titan Company Limited** says, "Tanishq has always aimed at providing the best for our customers and this fascinating initiative is one such approach in achieving the objective. Consumers had the option of browsing through multiple jewellery pieces virtually with just one click. The real-time customer experience strengthened the retail connection between the brand and our esteemed consumers; a transformative step on how India will shop and purchase jewellery in the near future."

GIRGGIT

With all kinds of innovation and technology already taking over the fashion industry, we almost forgot there is always something new coming this way. And now, we have been offered a range of **colour changing t-shirts** by a new entrant in the market, Girggit. Standing true to its name,



Girggit (meaning, chameleon, in English) t-shirts change its design and colour in sunlight. The same t-shirt looks different in design and colour if worn indoors, and changes form when one steps out.

These men's t-shirts are made from super fine-combed cotton and are available in extra small, small, medium and large sizes on all the leading e-commerce portals.

Talking about the innovations involved in the making of these, **Himanshu Thakur, Founder, Girggit** says, "Based on solar active technology, colour-changing inks and dyes are engineered for application on Girggit t-shirts. Much like a flower that blooms in the sun's rays, the hidden colours found in Girggit's exclusive prints unfold into vibrant colour upon exposure to sunlight, then returning to their original state without sunlight."

SHOPPERS STOP

In India, Shoppers Stop installed **Magic Mirrors** at their Malad store in Mumbai in November 2015.

Helping them in this endeavour was Textronics with their AR based virtual dressing room solution – TryON. Known as Magic Mirror at Shoppers Stop, TryON is a virtual dressing room.



It took Shoppers Stop approximately one month to roll out the Magic Mirror. The store at Malad was narrowed down upon keeping in mind its sheer size which happens to be one of their largest stores. In all, there are five Magic Mirrors installed at the store.

In terms of customer education, the retailer has ensured that the floor staff is trained well to respond to customer queries on how best the Magic Mirror can be used. Besides, there are well articulated instructions placed near the Magic Mirror

to navigate customers. Moreover, the Magic Mirror itself is an interactive kiosk that provides step-by-step instructions on its usage. A routine check is carried out every day to ensure its smooth functioning.

Anil Shankar, VP - Solutions and Technology, Shoppers Stop Ltd., says, "The Magic Mirror is a huge opportunity in terms of digitizing the store and providing endless options for the customers to try virtually. In future, we plan to integrate the Magic Mirror with other store solutions to improve customer engagement, as well as further enhancing the experience. Customers would be able to 'try', click and share images to their social media accounts."

SYGNAL

Broadcast Wearables Pvt Ltd., an AI based firm, is creating ripples across the globe with its blend of technology-infused fashion. It also is the parent holding of Sygnal, who has the distinction of producing the world's first programmable, **touch-enabled t-shirt.**



"We are an AI based wearables company on a mission to make everyday devices smart. We created the world's first programmable LED clothing line and haven't looked back ever since. We now specialise in the art, science, design and in-outs of integrating electronics with fashion. Our market offerings now range from smart fitness tracking t-shirts that tracks fitness levels without using any additional device, glow LED clothing line for women, kids, smart accessories and many more," says **Sumil Shah, Co-Founder, Broadcast Wearables Pvt Ltd.**

SAMSHÉK

Samshék embedded the role of technology in its brand from the very beginning,

by introducing the system of taking measurements digitally to make the fashion experience more realistic and accurate. It effectively combined the two mediums (fashion and technology) on the same platform to deliver excellence, accuracy and timely deliveries.



It was one of the first fashion brand to introduce and execute successfully the technology of 3D body scanner in India. 3D body scanner is a technology (machine) which requires a person to stand straight wearing a bodysuit, while it can take up to 150 measurements within a span of 5 seconds. This technology helps in contributing an accurate measurement analysis which is less possible by human methods.

"This technology works through an application in which, the person has to stand in front of the machine wearing a tight fitted bodysuit, holding the rails and standing still. Once the machinery has detected the measurements, it itself reflects on the application with the consumer's detailed body measurements. The reason behind incorporating this technology was to get a detailed analysis of all the human measurements and eliminate the problems faced by manual processes. This process helps in giving accurate results to the consumer as well as the industry," states **Samiksha Bajaj, Co-founder, Samshék.**

"We enable customisation through our website as well as in store on touch screens. We tell individualsthey can select from digital options and make changes in their garments accordingly. This includes modifying the necklines, sleeves, length of the garment, silhouette and even in some cases fabric. This process also eliminates the problem of in stock inventories since Samshék keeps all the inventories digitalised," she adds.

Very soon, the brand will also be launching the technology where customers can be virtually styled. A virtual stylist will analyse their body and give them the detailed outfits required for any occasion.

BESTSELLER

Adoption of technology concepts like AI, VR & AR for a more seamless retail experience have been the mainstay of Bestseller.



"One of our earliest implementations of AI-powered technology has been with Vero Moda, where we employed an AI-powered tool which interprets data collected across different digital platforms and aids in the prediction of trends. The **trend prediction tool** has greatly helped us in deciding various product based trends like colours, patterns, styles, etc. This has helped in narrowing consumer focused trends and thus tweak our product offering to include more products that are as per consumer preferences," says **Ranjan Sharma, CIO, Bestseller India.**

"We will be launching **Smart Mirrors** at Vero Moda stores. These mirrors will work as personal shopping assistants for the customer and create an interactive fitting experience for them. Based on the product that the customer is trying out, the smart mirror will assist the customer by sharing tips on what type of product features are suiting them, suggestions on colours and prints and even advice on what other products can be paired with the one they are trying out. This concept aims to enhance the overall offline shopping experience for a customer by creating a personalised fitting experience for them which should lead to more in-store conversions and purchases," he adds.

The brand is also in process of installing

Virtual Reality Screens or Virtual Shopping Walls – which will enable consumers to browse through the entire product catalogue of the brand's collection. Even if a particular size or colour is not available at the store, the customer can still make a selection and the store staff can check and have the required product delivered to the customer from another store or even order it online for the consumer. Currently, the brand has full inventory visibility available across a few stores and aim to implement it across all their brands for a more hassle free in-store shopping experience.

DRINX EXCHANGE

Mumbai-based Drinx Exchange has introduced **electronic tech tables**, where customers can interact with an electronic screen on the table they're dining on. From watching live scores of sports, to receiving personalised offers, tracking their orders, paying their bill, and even singing along with the music in the bar, these tech tables will ensure consumers remain engaged through the time they're in the restaurant. The screen also keeps giving them live offers that are just right for what they drink. The electronic table also splits the bill among the number of diners on the table and the payment can be settled on the table itself by scanning a Paytm QR Code on the screen

Furthermore, the prices of drinks also fluctuate just like the stock exchange and customers can vote to crash the market price. Apart from this, the table also helps the customers in checking the status of their cab if they book it from **Drinx Exchange app**.

According to **Rahul Dhingra and Dibyendu Bindal, Founders, Drinx Exchange**, "The bar aims to ease the

experience of ordering and makes it less stressful and more exciting for its millennial customers."

THE BEER CAFÉ

The Beer Café has recently introduced **'URBar'**, a virtual bar which allows patrons to reserve and consume their favourite brands.

One can explore from a wide selection of alco-beverage, pre-pay and stock them in 'URBar'. The latest 'wallet for customer's drinks' initiative highlights the brand's vision to redefine the alco-beverage space through technology differentiation and further strengthen its position as a pioneer.

The patrons can log in to **The Beer Café's app**, and click on the URBar icon, reserve in the form of bottle (for spirits), keg (for draught beer), or case (for bottled beer) and start consuming.

This not only gives patrons the privilege to buy their favourite brands at a special price but also benefits in the form of one price across the nation. A consumer can choose any portion he/she wishes to consume at any Beer Café outlet spread across 12 cities and save the rest for their next outing. The bottle/ keg purchased stands as a prepaid instrument and stock diminishes as the consumer opts to consume. There are multiple convenient ways of recharging the account. Customers can use an 'online' mobile wallet to add balance to their **brew bucks** – which is The Beer Café's own currency. Or 'pay at store' by just walking into the closest The Beer Café outlet and the brew crew will be happy to assist the customers.

What's more, it also gives patrons the option to spread the cheer around by gifting customisable amounts of their reserved stock to friends, family and colleagues.

Rahul Singh, Founder & CEO, The Beer Café says, "At The Beer Café, we believe that social drinking should first and foremost be about the experience. Our focus is to improve customer's real world experience, their choices of brand and location. With the URBar feature, we are giving the users a chance to experience our differentiated proposition in the virtual realm. It is a delightful addition to the existing feature on The Beer Café mobile app. With this initiative we have raised the bar – quite literally!"

TRAVEL FOOD SERVICES

Travel Food Services (TFS), travel food and retail company, has unveiled the latest in technology – **Mitri, the robot**, to make the experience of travellers interactive and fun.

Mitri engages with customers at TFS's DilliStreat outlet at Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi, and is the first ever airport installation in the F&B segment.

Visitors to the DilliStreat outlet are greeted by Mitri, who facilitates activities and engages with them by providing menu details. It also offers food recommendations. Mitri is a testament to Travel Food Service's commitment of enhancing the travel experience in India and presents a true example of how technology like Artificial Intelligence can



help improve customer satisfaction, and drive productivity and sales.

Commenting on the latest technology, **Gaurav Dewan, COO and Business Head, Travel Food Services** said,

“We are always on the lookout for latest innovative technologies that can enhance the experience and satisfaction of our customers. We are extremely excited to present Mitri at our DilliStreat

outlet at the Delhi Airport. With Mitri being such an innovative and futuristic concept, and given her success, we are hopeful to bringing her to more outlets across India.”

Loyalty Programs: Online Retailers

Cash on Delivery or COD is one of the most popular loyalty programs which is very commonly used by the retailers, brands (online and offline) shopping mall currently. Customers who are too busy in their daily life are more found of this service than any Sale or discount offers.

As **Riya Kalra - Co-founder, Candyskin** explains, “Online platforms are majorly driven by discounts/offers/cashbacks and online wallets. The millennial and individuals under 40 that shop online are more attracted towards online payments due to the cashbacks they are being provided with. A lot of times people who choose online payments are working individuals and do not have a lot of cash on them as they are on a fixed salary and get their salaries straight in their accounts. Also in the world of digitalisation, most individuals use plastic money like credit and debit cards rather than hard cash.”

“COD gives comfort and a sense of

protection to a first-time online consumer. Especially now that the expansion to tier 1 and tier 2 cities is becoming crucial for the companies and the next layer of e-commerce growth is slated to come from these cities, COD is a great option to enhance comfort and security for the customer. As we have seen the trend towards prepaid payments in metros, we are beginning to see it with tier 1 and tier 2 also, that by the time the third or fourth purchase for the consumer rolls out, they typically tend to switch to a prepaid payment option,” **Tanvi Malik & Shivani Poddar, Cofounder's FabAlley.**

Challenges

The major challenges associated are:

Skin in the game: Indians are quite skeptical because of fundamental cash behavior and concern regarding security. These mainly act as major bottlenecks on opting for other modes of payment. COD acts as a free lunch for customers and all the risks and costs are borne by the sellers.

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



Refunding: Could be a fraudulent order where the address is incorrect or the customer straight up deny's that they placed any order online. The order could be approved but later not be accepted by the customer. Refunding money to a COD customer is always a challenge.

High RTO and returns: The biggest challenge with COD payment mode is high RTO and returns. This cascades into high operational cost and a wide gap between the top of the funnel and bottom of the funnel numbers. Also, if you are running digital campaigns, it creates a flaw in your system which is exploited by digital agencies to meet their net order targets. If there is an agency with which you are running a Cost per Sale campaign, to meet their numbers they place fake COD orders which eventually gets RTOed and you end up paying both marketing and operational cost for those orders and earning nothing out of it.



(With Inputs from Charu Lamba, Sandeep Kumar & Zainab S Kazi)



'Fashion is Among the Top Three Categories for Amazon'

At present, the e-commerce giant has about 86,000 sellers who list close to 8.7 million different fashion styles across categories. In the past one year, Amazon has added 22,000 new sellers listing 2 million new products...

By Charu Lamba

The festive season that begins with Onam, peaks at Diwali and culminates with Christmas and New Year celebrations is a period of hectic activities for retailers and e-tailers alike as they aspire to offer the most interesting products to attract the maximum number of consumers.

Consumer sentiments are also high during this season and one category on which customers don't feel shy about splurging is fashion. To make the most of

this season of sale, brands like Amazon start preparing for the festive season months before it begins.

Highlighting what Amazon has introduced this year in a run up to the festive season, **Mayank Shivam, Director - Category Management, Amazon Fashion India** shares, "Fashion is among one of the top three categories for Amazon. One out of every three new customers to Amazon comes through fashion. To attract more customers this festive season, we have introduced a Plus

Size Store, a Designer Store and Premium Watches and along with this, we have entered into a strategic partnership with Max Fashion."

Amazon has also expanded its delivery network with a 2-day guarantee delivery to more than 200 cities in India. To bring alive the touch-and-feel factor alive in fashion, Amazon is offering 30-days return guarantee. "Apart from this, we have made lots of improvements in our online fashion experience. For example, we have increased the size of the product

"Fashion is among one of the top three categories for Amazon. One out of every three new customers to Amazon comes through fashion. To attract more customers this festive season, we have introduced a Plus Size Store, a Designer Store and Premium Watches and along with this, we have entered into a strategic partnership with Max Fashion."

- MAYANK SHIVAM

images, information of the product is shared in a very detailed manner along with a video highlighting the features of the products," Shivam states.

"As a result of all these changes, more than 65 percent of consumers on Amazon are coming from Tier II cities and beyond. We have a very deep believe that fashion is for everyone. It is our job to make it accessible," he adds.

Exploring Amazon Fashion

At present, the e-commerce giant has about 86,000 sellers who list close to 8.7 million different fashion styles across categories. In the past one year, the Amazon has added 22,000 new sellers listing 2 million new products.

"With such a huge seller eco-system, we are able to offer everything from regional sarees in handloom to designer wear.

Amazon has tied-up with most of the big, medium and small brands to offer the best fashion to its consumers," he explains.

Customers can shop from brands like Biba, W, Benetton, Mothercare, adidas, Puma, Samsonite, Fossil; celebrity brands like Rheson by Sonam and Riya, Nush by Anushka Sharma, Prowl by Tiger Shroff and designer brands like Rohit Bal, Ashish Soni, Payal Singhal, Ashima-Leena. Apart from offering regular collections, these brands keep on introducing their special collections curate especially for Amazon.

"We are also paying attention to get small artisans and sellers on-board. We have grown our platform from 1,000 small artisans and sellers last Diwali to 34,000 this year," says Shivam.

Women's ethnic wear is the fastest moving category at Amazon Fashion. It comprises of sarees from different regions of the country, ready-to-wear salwar-

AMAZON FESTIVE YATRA

Amazon has recently concluded its biggest festive celebration 'Great Indian Festival'. Customers experienced never-seen-before deals on the widest selection of smartphones, laptops, cameras, large appliances & TVs, home & kitchen products, fashion, consumables such as grocery & beauty, consumer electronics and more by lakhs of sellers.



Amazon.in's Great Indian Festival was flagged off with the #AmazonFestiveYatra – a unique 'house-on-wheels' bringing the best of India together in one place. The specially curated house-on-wheels also included selection from Amazon.in's Karigar and Saheli programs along with unique products from small & medium businesses, startups and artisans from every State & Union Territory of India. With 3 special trucks, #AmazonFestiveYatra covered 13 cities covering over 6,000 kms providing a great opportunity for Amazon customers and sellers to engage and share insights and opinions.

Starting from New Delhi, #AmazonFestiveYatra moved to Lucknow, Ahmedabad and Hyderabad before ending its trip in Bengaluru. Enroute this journey, the '#AmazonFestiveYatra' truck engaged with its customers and sellers in Agra, Chennai, Indore, Kolkata, Kochi, Mathura, Mumbai and Visakhapatnam.

Amazon.in has developed an entire ecosystem to offer an incomparable shopping experience to customers. The online marketplace has partnered with hundreds of leading brands, enabled over 500,000 sellers to sell on Amazon.in, and expanded fulfilment footprint with more than 50 fulfilment centres in 13 states offering a storage capacity of over 20 million cubic feet.



kameez and dress materials.

"We also have a jewellery store which has collections from large sellers like Mia by Tanishq to regional large players like Malabar, to a lot of small and upcoming jewellery brands. We have almost 30 plus sellers selling different types of gold coins and the category is seeing 150 percent growth year-on-year," Shivam states.

Partnership with Max Fashion

The Max store on Amazon Fashion was launched with the latest selection of seasonal fashion and trends from their Autumn '19 collection on August 01, 2019.

The launch of Max Fashion on Amazon Fashion in India came from the brand's view of improving its consumer reach and base. Their aim is to ensure that highly stylized fashion at affordable prices is made available across 100 percent pin codes, thereby transforming how India



AMAZON INDIA: THINGS TO KNOW

A. BUILDING THE WIDEST SELECTION

- Total selection stands at over 200 million+ products
- Amazon add over 200,000 products per day
- Millions of prime eligible products
- Launchpad - 500 start-ups and over 40,000 unique products across 30 different product categories

B. PROVIDING CONVENIENCE

- **Mobile:** Mobile contributes over 85 percent of the traffic on Amazon.in
- Reaching the next 100 million customers
 - Language
 - Amazon.in shopping experience in Hindi
 - Customer Service in 5 languages– English, Hindi, Kannada, Telugu and Tamil
 - Seller Support in 5 languages – same as above
 - Prime Video browsing

- experience in Hindi
- I Have Space - 23,500 I Have Space stores in over 350 cities
- Amazon Easy – Thousands of Amazon Easy stores across 21 states

→ Success metrics:

- Over 65 percent orders from Tier II and Tier III cities and towns
- 85 percent new customers from tier II and below geographies
- Amazon deliver to India's 100 percent serviceable pin codes in India through their own logistics network or through third party carriers.

C. SELLERS:

- 5 lakh+ sellers in India have benefited from various seller services offered by Amazon.in.
- Over 50 percent of the sellers are from Tier II and below cities. Amazon has sellers in places like Aligarh, Idukki in Kerala, Anugul in Orissa and Rajpipla in Gujarat

- Number of Indian sellers selling on Amazon's global marketplaces – 50,000+ with over 140 million listed products to millions of customers across 12 international markets
- 150,000 weavers and artisans across 15 states and 48 clusters in India are benefitting through Amazon's 'Karigar' (previously Kalahaat) program to reach a diverse set of customers across the country.

D. FULFILLMENT INFRASTRUCTURE:

- More than 50 fulfillment centres with 24 million cubic feet of storage space across 13 states;
- 15 Prime Now nodes in 4 cities
- Sort centres across 19 States with more than 1.5 million square feet of processing space
- More than 200 Amazon owned delivery stations
- 700 delivery service partner stations with direct presence in every State and Union Territory



shops for fashion. The store was launched with full-feature apparel selections for men and women – across tops, t-shirts, dresses, jeans, trousers, jackets, and also kids' apparel.

“We launched Max on Amazon with close to 5,000 styles. The store features apparel selections for men and women – across tops, t-shirts, dresses, jeans, trousers, jackets, and also kid's apparel. Apart from this, customers saw the Max festive range coming on Amazon which is something that they had specially curated for the festive season,” says Shivam.

Amazon Designer Store

Amazon has tied up 225 well-known and emerging designers. It's working closely with the designer community in India to get them listed on Amazon. It is also helping them in develop images and create catalogues.

“The new designers have talent on the design side and we are just helping them get access to customers and if you look at the ratings, the feedback on the product that customer give to them, it is very

exciting to see an emerging designer and a customer in a small town been connected,” he shares.

“We have created a marketplace where emerging designers from any corner of India can come and reach out to millions of customers,” he adds.

Enhancing Consumer Experience

To enhance the overall consumer experience, the Amazon is focusing on three things - selection, convenience and value.

“We are offering millions of styles to our customers and still we are looking for more options to explore. As far as convenience is concerned, we are trying to improve the data quality, image, detailing in size charts and we are also offering a 30-day no question asked return policy. Lastly, we enable our sellers to provide the best value to our customers and we do that by ensuring that it is easy for sellers to list, lower the cost of distribution for them by giving them a large customer base,” concludes Shivam. **IR**

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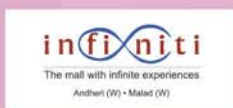


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Going Green: Retail Giants Shift Industry Focus Toward Sustainability

The green movement is no longer a fad, but a reality. The need to use and reuse sustainable materials is more important and significant now than ever before. Faced with the alarming prospect that the Earth will begin to run out of natural resources that are imperative for mankind to survive, retail leaders – convinced that the industry has the potential for intervention to integrate sustainable practices – are working towards switching to eco-friendly practices...

By Charu Lamba

Climate, biodiversity and oceans. One might wonder what they have to do with retail, and the answer is: a lot! The Retail Industry worldwide, and especially the fashion retail sector produces enormous amounts of waste, while using an immense amount of resources. Like all manufacturing sectors, producing retail products too has a severe impact on the environment.

Faced with the alarming prospect that the Earth will begin to run out of natural resources that are imperative for mankind to survive, retail leaders – convinced that the industry has the potential for intervention to integrate sustainable practices – are working towards switching to eco-friendly practices. They are working towards taking ecologically responsible decisions which can help protect the environment and sustain natural resources for current and future generations.

For many retailers, the focus has shifted to introducing sustainable products and sustainable ways of producing products. Recently, 16 retail fashion brands signed the Su.Re (sustainability resolution) project launched by the Textile Ministry, IMG Reliance and Clothing Manufacturers Association Of India (CMAI). Brands like Spykar, Westside, Trends, Shoppers Stop, fbb, House of Anita Dogre and Lifestyle and Max have recently joined the movement that aims to develop sustainable sourcing policy for consistent prioritising and utilising certified raw materials that have a positive impact on the environment.

However, understanding the subject of sustainability and its impact is still emerging in India because the country is still experimenting and learning, not only in fashion retail, but in almost all industries as on date.

In this article, IMAGES Retail explores how brands are going sustainable and how they are putting their best forward to make sustainable fashion cost-effective. The article also explores how viable is sustainability as a model for various retail brands.

Trends Shaping Sustainable Fashion

The fashion industry is fast undergoing ecological awakening, transitioning into a more sustainable zone, leading to adoption of sustainability in thought process, design, production process and disposal by the industry at large.

Trends that are actively shaping sustainable fashion are the use of materials like recycled nylon, recycled polyester, TENCEL Lyocell fibres, Pinatex and BCI (Better Cotton Initiative) Cotton.

Highlighting other trends, a spokesperson from **SELECTED HOMME** shares, "Conversations on going on a fashion diet in order to shop less and wear more are also doing the rounds a lot these days. Repeating clothes is another trend that is catching on. People have no qualms about donning the same outfits again or giving them a new lease of life by adapting new styles."



"People are also opting to wear clothes that tell a tale. We have seen consumers leaning towards products like their grandfather's cufflinks, their father's necktie, and brother-in-law's socks while enhancing them with products from their own wardrobes. It's beautiful to see that every outfit now has a narrative," he adds.

Apart from this, a lot of online and offline stores have started renting out and outsourcing wardrobes. This is a trend which will soon be affecting the buying and consumption pattern of garments.

"In sustainable fashion, apart from the trends, the process is very important. Usage of recycled yarn fabric, zero liquid discharge, treatments that use minimal water are widely seen," says **Sanjay Vakharia, Chief Executive Officer, Spykar Lifestyle**.

Weaving Cost-Effectiveness into Sustainability

Sustainable fashion concerns are more than just addressing fashion textiles or products. It comprises of addressing the whole system of fashion. This means dealing with interdependent social, cultural, ecological and financial systems. It also means considering fashion from the perspective of many stakeholders - users and producers, all living species, contemporary and future dwellers on earth.

"Adopting sustainable methods whether in terms of using raw material



like blended fabrics, using organic cotton which uses lesser chemicals, using special yarns made from post-consumer waste etc. or switching to sustainable processes that involve use of better technology which helps reducing consumption of water / chemicals for industrial washes, use of zero discharge technology and recycling the water etc every such step towards sustainability involves increased costs. However, by way of recycling/ using lesser of consumable natural resources and by sourcing and producing more efficiently, and by controlling/ monitoring the processes closely, the cost can be kept under control," says **Manjula Gandhi, Chief Product Officer, Numero Uno**.

Brands like LivaEco, B Label are putting in their best foot forward to provide sustainable fashion at cost-effective prices to the consumers.

"LivaEco garments in retail are available at almost similar price as any other garment. Also, LivaEco is a fabric, and fabric comprises a very small percentage of the overall garment cost," shares **Shardah Uniyal, Vice President - Branding & Communications at Liva, Birla Cellulose**.

"B Label offers sustainable hemp clothing at affordable prices. There are not many brands that offer competitive prices for eco-friendly clothing. Our goal is to create a large community of individuals who care to co-exist and don't have to spend large amounts of money to do so. We would like to be an alternative option to fast fashion brands in order to make sustainable fashion easily available to all," says **Chirag Tekchandaney, Co-Founder and Director of Marketing and Human Resources at BOHECO**. Tekchandaney is also Business Head of BOHECO's apparel brand, B Label as well as their accessories brand, B Label Handlooms.





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- CHIRAG
TEKCHANDANEY



"Circular production model is one innovative concept where the end product is entirely recycled and transformed back into the original fibres and other components so that it can be recreated again, as good as new."

- HARKIRAT SINGH

Can Fast Fashion & Sustainability Co-exist?

Fast fashion work is repetitive, monotonous and the opposite of fulfilling, resulting in large volumes of production. Sustainable fashion as an approach maximises benefits to people and minimises environmental as well as commercial impact. Every garment has an environmental footprint at every stage in its production and that is why there

is a deep-rooted contradiction between the fast fashion business model and the concept of sustainability.

"Fast fashion compels consumers to buy more; also, the rate at which clothing gets discarded and ends up in landfills is increasing disturbingly as consumers chase latest fashion trends. Hence, fast fashion is considered as one of the major causes of sustainability issues the industry faces. Slow fashion, on the contrary,

should become the norm, with consumers wearing classically styled garments that last for years instead of months or weeks," states Gandhi.

"The growth of ethical consumption has not materialised in mainstream fashion. Infact, certain ethically minded brands believe that it is the consumer and his insatiable need for buying the latest fashion trends that drives fast fashion. This combined with their lack of awareness of the issues faced by the industry or through an unwillingness to pay the premium for sustainable products makes sustainability a farfetched possibility," she adds.

Resonating the same thoughts, **Harkirat Singh, Managing Director, Woodland Worldwide** says, "Circular production model is one innovative concept where the end product is entirely recycled and transformed back into the original fibres and other components so that it can be recreated again, as good as new. Although it leads to almost entirely zero waste, but it cannot be a solution for fast fashion."

"Sadly, fast fashion is associated with low-cost trendy products, exploitation of people and the huge number of unsold products being discarded as waste that end up in landfills. The products themselves are not designed to last a



PRO ECUADOR COLLABORATES WITH INDIAN TEXTILE MANUFACTURERS TO DRIVE SUSTAINABLE CLOTHING TRENDS IN INDIA

The Indian textiles industry, currently estimated at around US\$ 108 billion, is expected to reach US\$ 223 billion by 2021. The Indian Textile Industry contributes approximately 5 percent to India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 14 percent to the overall Index of Industrial Production (IIP). Further, the organized apparel segment is expected to grow at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of more than 13 percent over a 10-year period. With the introduction of Government investment schemes (TCIDS and APES), US\$ 140 billion of foreign investments are expected.

Even as these factors drive the growth, the rising consumer trends around sustainable fashion and 'green' clothing, is gaining popularity. Especially the Millennial consumer, who is more aware of global trends and responsible consumerism, and the upwardly mobile, are driving a number of Indian designers to churn out chic 'green fashion' lines.

From adopting zero-waste policies, to reviving ancient hand-weaving and embroidery techniques (considered more environment-friendly), and rolling out separate labels etc., both Indian and international fashion brands are increasingly adopting sustainable means to innovate and stay relevant in the dynamic fashion industry.

Apart from returning to natural dyes, organic fabrics and traditional modes of manufacturing, the use of eco-friendly products for accessorising and embellishments is expected to find a long way in making fashion truly green and sustainable.

Corozo, a native of the Amazon rainforest in Ecuador, has been harvested naturally and used as a popular material for buttons and embellishments since the 1860s. While it was extensively replaced with plastic in the 1940s, Corozo is again gaining popularity, especially in India. Ecuador has been one of the largest exporters of Corozo to India and worldwide. As the only exporter of Corozo in the world, Ecuador has been effectively providing and promoting the use of Corozo to textile manufacturers and designers, helping change the narrative and design of global fashion.

In India, PRO Ecuador, a part of the Ministry of Production, Foreign Trade, Investment, and Fisheries, under the Government of Ecuador, has been collaborating with Indian Textile manufacturers, like Raymonds, Blackberry, SS Homme etc., to drive the use of Corozo, also known as Vega Ivory, to promote green clothing. In the recently concluded Lakme Fashion Week, PRO Ecuador collaborated with a designer label, Ka Sha to showcase the versatility of Corozo, which was very well received.

long time. Larger brands need to adopt a more sustainable approach to production using more durable materials, adopt fair working conditions, donate, recycle or even up-cycle their waste; it is only then fast fashion and sustainability can coexist," says Tekchandaney.

Encouraging Conscious Consumerism

Millennials and Generation Z are the largest leaders in the sustainability movement, according to the ThredUP 2019 Resale Report. They belong to a newer generation who defy norms, are more informed, aware and conscious of their surroundings, they feel responsible and concerned for preserving the natural environment.



"A study says that 66 percent of global millennials are willing to spend more on brands that are sustainable. The value they place on how brands do business and what brands stand for is off-the-charts compared to any prior generation. It's a two-way road and to construct it better, we educate the shoppers about the core values that are behind the purchase they have made. If one informs them about how sustainable fashion is contributing to make socio-economic and environmental status better; they not only appreciate it but are willing to extend a helping hand too," says Singh.

Similarly, the increase in consumer consciousness concerning ethical and sustainable issues in the personal care industry is driving a socially responsible actions from many beauty brands.

"Rewards and appreciation are two methods that have worked in our case to encourage consumers who support our eco-friendly ways. We extend discount to





"Rewards and appreciation are two methods that have worked in our case to encourage consumers who support our eco-friendly ways."

- NATASHA SHAH



"Conscious consumerism has led beauty and personal care brands, to come up with eco-friendly and sustainable products."

- RAHUL AGARWAL



"At IKEA, we constantly challenge ourselves to improve our sustainability footprint."

- PETER BETZEL

our customers when they send back old, used plastic bottles for us to recycle them. We also run promotions on special days like on every billing, we plant trees in their name," says **Natasha Shah, Founder, The Nature's Co.**

Future of Sustainable Products in India

Retailers in India have started to realise the impact on environment which has led to a shift in their focus. While this a very welcome change, it isn't about the legal obligations of CSR anymore. The use of recycled fibres and the introduction of innovative fibres is on the rise. The market for sustainable products is set to grow in the coming years and Millennials as well as Gen-Z are helping spread awareness about the benefits, there by bringing about an increase in demand for sustainable products.

"The consumer is becoming more and more conscious of the environmental damages of fast fashion and the need for a circular economy. In India, leading international and domestic brands have already started making brand statements by introducing special eco-friendly lines, and soon we will start seeing the rest of the market emulating the same." Uniyal shares.

Resonating the same thoughts, Singh shares, "In the coming years, the demand and need for sustainable

fashion is only going to increase as people are now aware about the importance of sustainable fashion and its impact on nature. Consumers' positive mindset towards sustainable brands with environment concern, business plans and techniques, is increasing, which will lead to the growth of a sustainable fashion industry."

"Consumers today are more cognizant and appreciating of the fact that brands are conscious about being eco-friendly. With conducive government policies, the sustainability pledge would get meatier and see more and more consumers subscribing to it," says Vakharia.

And it's not just the fashion retail industry which is pledging to go green. The Beauty & Personal Care sector too is more eco-conscious, working towards adopting green practices.

"Conscious consumerism has led beauty and personal care brands, to come up with eco-friendly and sustainable products. With the change in consumer lifestyle and adaptation of healthier habits, the sustainable products industry under different verticals is going to expand," says **Rahul Agarwal, CEO, Organic Harvest.**

"Today's consumers are well read, conscious of its surroundings. If industry owners decide to move brands towards sustainable products, the consumers will be more than happy to support them. It's a small contribution everyone makes at his or her own level," concludes Shah.



WHAT BRANDS ARE DOING TO GO SUSTAINABLE

IKEA

To be people and planet positive is integrated in the way IKEA does business. Sustainability is part of the brand's roots and the vision to create a better everyday life for the many people – including suppliers, co-workers, customers and the communities around them. That includes caring for people and the planet. Making more from less and finding new, creative ways to deal with limited resources are part of the IKEA way of working. Today, this is more important than ever as the world faces huge challenges such as climate change, increasing inequality and unsustainable consumption.

"IKEA constantly challenges itself to improve its sustainability footprint. With 4 million people visiting the Hyderabad store last year and more and more people shopping online for their products, IKEA has a great opportunity to inspire and enable people to live sustainable lives," says Peter Betzel, CEO & Chief Sustainability Officer, IKEA India.

All of IKEA's textiles are made from 100 percent better cotton, all lights are 100 percent LED and 77 percent wood in IKEA products come from more sustainable sources. In Hyderabad, the aim is to have 100 percent home deliveries with electric vehicles (EVs) by 2025 and as of today 20 percent of home deliveries in India are already done with EVs.

IKEA has collaborated with different stakeholders to turn rice straw, a rice harvesting residue that is traditionally burnt and contributes heavily to air pollution in North India into a renewable material source for making IKEA products. This collection is called FÖRÄNDRING which will be launched soon in IKEA stores around the world.



The brand is removing all single use plastic from our range by this year. It is taking many steps towards achieving their goal which is that by 2030, IKEA will use only recycled and renewable materials.

H&M

One of the pillars of H&M's sustainability strategy is to become 100 percent circular and renewable. This includes, among other things, a circular approach to how products are made and used and the goal to only use recycled or other sustainably sourced materials and renewable energy in all the direct operations.

Cotton is the material that the brand uses the most to make their products. The aim is for all cotton in the range to come solely from sustainable sources by 2020. Hence, the cotton goal is a key player in the global ambition of becoming 100 percent circular and the goal to only use recycled and other sustainably sourced materials by 2030, thanks to their further investment in organic, recycled and Better Cotton (see below definition for Better Cotton).

For the H&M group being 100 percent circular and renewable means having a circular approach to how fashion is made and used, including the goal to only use recycled or other sustainably sourced materials by 2030. In this way, products will never be seen as waste at the end of their lifetime, they will be treated as a valuable resource instead by reusing and recycling them over again.

The new sustainable materials that were used for the Conscious Exclusive 2019 collection were-

→ **Orange fibre** is made from citrus juice by-products, repurposing them to



create silk-like cellulose fabric.

→ **Piñatex®** is a natural leather alternative made from cellulose fibres extracted from pineapple leaves, the waste of the pineapple harvest

→ **BLOOMFoamis** a plant-based flexible foam using algae from freshwater sources at high risk of algal bloom

LEE COOPER

Every season, Lee Cooper aims to get better and outdo itself. In the bid to be a responsible, environment friendly brand with a legacy of over 110 years, it has adopted the following innovations:

→ **e-Flow Washing Technology:** Uses considerably lesser amount of water and energy whilst replacing harmful chemicals with alternative formulas.



→ **G2 Cube Technology:** Allows the brand to eliminate the usage of toxic processes like bleaching and paramagnet altogether.

→ **Laser Technology:** Recreating the traditional denim look by using laser, in turn reducing the energy consumption.

→ **Indigo Dyeing:** Replaced Indigo powder by patent pended Liquid Indigo from DyStar to save gallons of water.

PEPE JEANS

Pepe Jeans believes that the future of denims is sustainable. The brand has been working on addressing its environmental impact for the last few years on a global level. Keeping in mind the need for sustainable clothing, Pepe Jeans introduced a range of environmentally



conscious denims including True-Fresh and Tru-Blu in 2018.

The True-Fresh range of denim uses a revolutionary technology that neutralizes odour causing bacteria on contact, in turn keeping denims fresh for longer. Denims treated with this technology can be worn more often without washing. Even after days of continuous use, the denim retains its freshness. Tru-Blu is a pioneering denim collection with zero chemical washes, resulting in radical reduction of water consumption. This sustainable production process includes natural ozone gas treatments and sophisticated new three-dimensional lasers to create astonishing depths of indigo contrasts on jeans.

ARVIND

For Arvind, sustainability goes beyond the usage of environment friendly products and processes. It is a lifestyle where all their day to day steps contribute to a sustainable society.



Arvind considers environmental, social and economic sustainability major pillars of its business model and is fully focused on adhering to it in all their endeavours. The practices and processes are geared not

only to optimize utilization of the resources, but also nurture their roots and bring out the best of their innovation and design.

There is a lot that goes behind the scenes in making denims more sustainable and this is a way of life at Arvind. From farming of crops to finished garments, the brand is innovating in all aspects to create more synergies and value drivers for consumer's business and making their jeans as sustainable as possible.

Internationally, customers who lean towards sustainability work with the brand because Arvind is considered to be an innovator of sustainability. Sustainability has become way of doing business for Arvind and is not merely a unique selling proposition and the brand is happy to showcase their leadership in transforming the industry.

WOODLAND

Woodland has recently introduced its latest range of bio-degradable shoes which strengthen its association with the environmental care. The launch of bio-degradable footwear was the brand's CSR Project, Proplanet - a wing dedicated to making the mother Earth a better place to live. It is one of the most exciting environmental innovations to be witnessed by the footwear industry. Aside from this, Woodland is well known for its eco-friendly initiatives and for informing consumers about the importance of keeping Earth clean and green.

The brand also has apparels which are eco-friendly:



→ **Organic Cotton T-shirts:** Free of toxins and pesticides, Woodland's Proplanet t-shirts are made of 100 percent organic cotton. The brand is committed to minimising its ecological

footprint throughout all phases of the production process and is working towards making the production line eco-friendlier.

→ **Pure Green T-shirts:** These pure green t-shirts are made from recycled PET (plastic) bottles. The plastic bottles are sterilised and processed into fibre strands. These strands are knitted together to create a fabric, which is used to produce 100 percent recycled T-shirts.

SELECTED HOMME

Given that sustainability is one of the key values of the brand, the way it designs and procures products to create SELECTED is what makes all the difference. Organic fibres with no hazardous chemicals are used, waste materials like leftover fabric or plastic bottles are processed into recycled fibres and reborn as new textiles.



NUMERO UNO

For Numero Uno, sustainability is not just about making a contained range and labelling it as conscious/sustainable. It is about inciting a real change at every stage of the product lifecycle possible, from manufacturing to washing and finishing, to delivery, to recycling and disposal.

Numero Uno has taken significant steps towards setting up an ethical and sustainable ecosystem from the beginning, adopting eco-friendly processes and technology with emphasis on low water consumption, restricted use of hazardous chemicals and good working conditions for its workforce.

Recently, the brand has collaborated with Gen-Next designer Anurag Gupta



for LakméFashion Week to create 'denim master pieces' from garments in stock. The aim behind this collection was to reuse the stock of unused denim into new pieces with innovative designs. This collection was a step towards sustainable fashion as water is getting saved in the entire process. The collaboration used eco-friendly methods of production resulting in pieces that evoke a youthful and modern vibe.

There has been a conscious, gradual and consistent shift towards sustainable methods, adoption of effective technology like extensive use of laser machines instead of hand-scraping for benefit of workers' health. The use of 'E-Soft, Ozone/G2, Cold-Eco Dyeing' has helped in reducing water and hazardous chemical consumption.

Besides this, rainwater harvesting to replenish ground water, use of solar water-heaters and energy-efficient lights in the factory also help in reducing burden on natural resources.

The brand has also installed an ETP which cleans water and operates on zero liquid discharge technology such that all the water used in washing process is completely recycled making us a truly eco-conscious & responsible brand.

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

LIVA

Liva, the fabric brand of the Aditya Birla Group, was launched in 2015. It is natural fluid fabric which is made from the eucalyptus, aspen, birch, maple and fir trees. The launch of Livaeco by Liva is an initiative in this direction. Whilst

Liva itself is a highly sustainable fabric, Livaeco is a Gen-2 version of Liva with better sustainability credentials. It uses raw materials from sustainable and certified forests. It boasts of the lowest water consumption and low greenhouse gas emissions during the manufacturing process.

To build credibility, the brand has added a unique tracer in the fabric thus ensuring source credibility. Tracer is a method of identifying the journey of the final garment and its origin from fibre stage. This is a globally accepted method and gives visibility of source.

B LABEL

B Label is driven by the potential that sustainable fashion holds for a greener future. As a brand, it strives to be sustainable at their core and to support this it works with one of the world's most durable and eco-friendly natural fibres – Industrial Hemp.



Hemp is a carbon negative crop; it requires 400 times less water to grow than cotton does. Additionally, hemp is a fast-growing crop, so the use of fertilizer and pesticides is minimal. Hemp as a fabric is much more breathable and long-lasting, making the life span of each garment much more than other fibres.

Apart from producing clothes with this wonderful fibre, the brand has mindfully attempted to distribute their clothes in zero-plastic packaging.

SPYKAR

Spykar is conscious of production techniques and its impact on the environment. With that in mind, the brand is collaborating with vendors and service providers who comply with nature conservation norms for producing apparels. Fashion denims that traditionally have been the villain in the environment conservation story are now the epitome of sustainable product, from the Spykar stable.



100 percent of Spykar's fashion denim range – which is about 50 percent of the overall jeans production – is done at a super compliant plant at Tarapur that follows several measures of environmental preservation. This 50 percent follow the following environment-friendly processes and aiming to exponentially increase the share in the future:

- A new-agelaser treatment for intricate patterns eliminates chemical footprint.
- Ozone technology is used to harness the natural bleaching capabilities of O₃ – leading to 50 percent reduction in water and chemical usage.
- Likewise, cloud technology uses mist formed by inducing high pressured air into the water creating nano-bubbles,

16 RETAIL FASHION BRANDS COMMIT TO SUSTAINABILITY

In August, 2019, 16 fashion retail brands signed the Su.Re (sustainability resolution) project launched by the Textile Ministry, IMG Reliance and Clothing Manufacturers Association Of India (CMAI).

Textile Minister Smriti Irani launched the project, in association with the UN, on Thursday at the Lakme Fashion Week Winter/Festive 2019 being held here.

Retail brands like Spykar, Westside, Trends, Shoppers Stop, fbb, House of Anita Dogre and Lifestyle and Max joined the movement that aims to develop sustainable sourcing policy for consistent prioritising and utilising certified raw materials that have a positive impact on the environment.

In her address at the event which was also attended by Renata Lok-Dessallien, UN Resident Coordinator in India, Irani said: "Never before in a population our size has voluntarily driven the retail force of India and fashion elite along with the government to come together at one platform. That this has happened voluntarily makes me proud."

She said that sustainability is the fourth criteria for 57 percent of the consumers of the apparel and design industry. "This (project) makes it not only responsible business but also smart business. This project will impact worth ₹30,000 crore in the market. Everything that we consume, we must consume responsibly."



Jaspreet Chandok, Vice President and Head of Fashion, IMG Reliance, said: "This is a true confluence of what we want to stand for in fashion in the country which is a melting point of ideas that brings transformational change. Today is a major step towards that change with the launch of Su.Re which is the first and the largest initiative by the fashion industry."

"This initiative is just a start point. In the next five years, it will reach millions and millions of garments in the country turning from non-sustainable resources to sustainable resources."

thereby covering larger surface area in minimal water.

- Drying is done through infra-red rays to ensure fossil fuels are conserved.
- Pumice stones are discarded to maintain the ecological balance.
- A water recycling process ensures 90 percent water is recycled. From whopping 125 ltrs/jeans, the consumption has now reduced to 1 glass of water/jeans.
- Zero fossil fuel usage and relies on solar power for 30 percent of their energy requirement. Solar dependency to increase to 60 percent by 2021.
- Measures have also been taken by the government to ensure the land for the facility was not used for agriculture; an arid plot was hence assigned.

WRANGLER

Wrangler®, a part of Kontoor Brands, Inc. has introduced the first denim apparel dyed with foam, an innovative technique that uses 100 percent less water than conventionally dyed denim. The global product launch of foam-dyed denim follows Wrangler's promise to discover

and implement throughout its supply chain the most sustainable ways for dyeing denim.

Indigood™ Foam-Dye entirely replaces the traditional water drums and chemical baths of traditional indigo dyeing, reducing by 100 percent the amount of water required to turn denim that beloved shade of indigo blue. The new dyeing process also reduces energy use and waste by more than 60 percent compared to the traditional denim dyeing process.

The Indigood™ products will be featured in the ICONS Collection, giving consumers access to Wrangler's most iconic products with the highest level



of sustainability available on the denim market today. In addition, with absolutely no compromise to quality, the Indigood™ products include recycled cotton, laser and ozone finishing.

ORGANIC HARVEST

Organic Harvest is not just a personal care range; it is a lifestyle. 'Sustainability' lies at the core of our brand philosophy. The motto of the brand is to make this world a better and beautiful place to live in and endorse 'a chemical-free and organic lifestyle' as a universal mantra.

It is one of the pioneers of campaign



against the use of chemicals in personal care products as they seep into consumer's skin via your everyday creams, lotions and products and lead to grave damage to the environment as well as on the skin.

It is continuously making efforts to promote awareness towards 'organic way of life' by adhering to various principles and actions. It urges people to switch to an organic regime of skincare as organic products are environmentally sustainable and skin friendly.

Through their products, the brand is urging people to take a closer look at their consumption patterns and adopt an organic sustainable lifestyle. Through

its continuous efforts, it is trying to build the momentum for a better and healthier lifestyle and bring a positive change on the horizon.

NATURE'S CO

Apart from being all natural, the brand's philosophy has been a step ahead of being completely Vegan. All products are certified by PETA-India. Not only the brand, the vendors selections is done on basis of no cruelty on animals, no use of animal bi-products or even not testing the products on animals.

The usage on one-time plastic (bubble



wraps) has been replaced by Kraft Corrugated Sheets. New product range of candles is introduced in glass jars instead of plastic.

September 15 is marked as Pro-Green Day - an initiative of The Nature's Co. where every year the brand takes eco-friendly steps like planting of trees for every bill, distributing seeds to customers with every order, using cloth/ jute bags instead of plastic bags, recycling used plastic containers through their eco-barrel, e-bill etc.

GUESS ECO COLLECTION FOR FALL 2019

This fall 2019, GUESS is introducing GUESS Eco: a collection for men and women made with environmentally conscious materials and manufacturing processes. The collection supports the brand's sustainability goal to develop 25 percent of its denim and source 20 percent of its materials according to its GUESS Eco guidelines by 2021. The GUESS Eco collection started in Europe in 2016 and is now offered globally every season.

Utilizing water-saving techniques




and environmentally friendly practices, all GUESS Eco denim this season, as well as select non-denim styles, features Lenzing's TENCEL™ Lyocell. Loved for its lightweight, cool and soft hand feel, TENCEL™ branded fibers are derived from responsibly managed forests protected from illegal forest management practices.

GUESS's Eco Luxe denim, available in six different styles and washes, features TENCEL™ lyocell with REFIBRA™ technology – an innovative process that helps to reduce industry waste by upcycling cotton scraps from manufacturing. The brand's classic 1981 Skinny and Sexy Curve fits have been developed with Eco Luxe denim fabrication and can be outfitted with logo and graphic t-shirts and tanks made with 100 percent organic cottons well knit tops and dresses made with Lenzing's TENCEL™ Modal. For men, Eco Luxe slim tapered denim jeans in light to medium washes are seen alongside Super Skinny and Skinny style fits.



L'OPÉRA

Responsible and sustainable growth is one of the eight core values of L'Opéra which also includes elements such as commitment to excellence and quality, collaboration and mutual respect, gender equality, honesty and transparency, meritocracy and equal opportunity, courtesy and ownership and accountability. At L'Opéra, the owners are creating a brand which would last for generations.

This fundamental 'sustainability' requires a profound and honest relationship with all stakeholders, namely the staff, the customers and the shareholders but also with the society and with the environment. 

Technology, Innovation & Service: The Three Pillars of Modern Retail

Retailers today are constantly reconstructing their business models and experimenting with latest technology like Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Quantum Computing, E-Tailing in the race to dominate the market with their superior customer service...

By Navin Ladha, CEO, RanceLab®

In recent years, the retail industry has been attracted and influenced by various technological innovations and developments that have contributed significantly to the digital transformation of the world. The idea of development revolves around innovation in consumer centric retail technology rather than brand-centric technological practices. With increased exposure to digital media, consumers are more aware of the innovations in this segment and are constantly looking for something extra. It may be in the form of better brand experience, added advantages, greater comfort, convenience and much more. It has thus become important to channelise practices around improving customer service, providing convenience while shopping, comforting experience, multiple choices etc.

Retailers today totally understand and realise the importance of digitisation and have integrated the latest technology in their day to day retail practices for

improved services and higher revenues. They are constantly reconstructing their business model and experimenting with the latest technology like AI, ML, Quantum Computing, e-Tailing and more in the race to dominate the market with their superior customer service. High tech innovations not only help retailers stay competitive and marketable but also facilitates their growth through better business analytics, improved planning and excellent decision making.

Making an Impact

RanceLab® FusionRetail has been assisting the retail industry since 1996 with its specialised services, bringing world-class technologies at the doorstep of the retailers. It provides an all in one ERP software that gives business owners control over multiple business operations from Point of Sale transaction, inventory management, financial accounting, customer relationship management,

payroll management, supply chain, schemes and promotions and many more. It connects all end to end business functions and keeps business owners ahead of the competition from other similar and larger businesses. Unlike others, it helps them make their profits sooner, reach break-even faster and open new outlets quicker.

Advanced tools like ML and AI not only helps business owners process new information quickly but gain valuable business insights and a better understanding of customer behaviour by analyzing their shopping patterns, trends and preferences. Data derived from AI facilitate improved decision making and better recommendations, thus ensuring that the customer gets what they want, and the business generates higher profits. FusionRetail is an amalgamation of intelligent business modules that allows business owners to penetrate deeper into the market and gives them valuable information about the consumer mindset. It comprises of advanced tools like matrix creator, bulk updates, user-defined fields and lists, customisation of reports etc. It allows owners to analyze sales during specific periods (years, quarterly intervals, months) for each customer or each product category. It also allows users to create a report showing the top 10 customers, by items purchased and reports that show the most or least popular products.

These technologies are offering a lot currently to the retail industry and will keep on adding more to the services, due to their contribution and delivering capacity. Proper implementation and utilisation of such modern technologies will take the industry to the next level of the digital world with increased in-store engagement, improved customer service and better operational efficiency. **IR**



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NOVEMBER 2019 Retail Franchising: IMAGES Retail November 2019 issue will bring a feature on 'Franchising: The Way of Expanding a Brand's Footprint in India.' The edition will highlight the factors related to establish a new franchise of brands, mainly investment, guidelines and other necessary details.

DECEMBER 2019 CIO Special- Technology and Innovation: IMAGES Retail December 2019 issue will bring a feature on India's most popular CIOs. The coverage will talk about their favourite innovations and technology trends happening in the retail industry, also focusing on how their brands are inculcating and living up with these changes.

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

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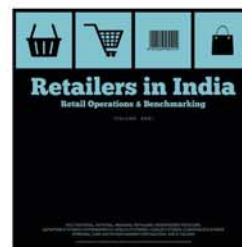
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Clog London Launches E-Commerce Operations

In a short span of five years, the brand – which started with a capacity of making 5,000 shoes per year – has established itself in multiple key chain stores pan India and is producing and supplying 40,000 shoes per year...

By IMAGES Retail Bureau



Lunched in 2014, Clog London is a premium leather footwear brand, which is popular for its empowered sense of glamour, design and comfort. In a short span of five years, the brand – which started with a capacity of making 5,000 shoes per year – has established itself in multiple key chain stores pan India and is producing and supplying 40,000 shoes per year. The brand recently launched its own e-commerce website, www.cloglondon.com to announce its online presence.

Categories

Clog London encompasses a complete footwear brand. It manufactures formals, casuals, driving shoes and sneakers. It has been delivering the right mix of timeless

style, comfort and quality and therefore has already established itself as a hot favourite of customers looking for both class and comfort.

In the casual category Clog London provides smart and elegant shoes in:

- Boots
- Loafers
- Sneaker
- Slip-ons

In the formal category, the brand has

- Brouge
- Derby
- Oxford

Brand Value

Clog London has earned itself many satisfied customers over the years and an

inflow of continuous repeat orders from the most established stores across India. The brand is also very popular and is doing amazing sales on various e-commerce platforms. Following the huge success in various platforms Clog London is now focused on providing better customer service through their personalized e-commerce website. The footwear brand is very popular and in high demand across many SIS formats.

“There is a huge demand for good leather footwear in India. As the maximum amount of leather products are exported, there is a huge gap in the leather footwear market in India. Clog London’s focus is to fill that gap and provide high-quality leather footwear to our customers.”

– GOPAL KISHAN RATHOR
DIRECTOR, CLOG LONDON.

Offline Stores & Expansion

Apart from online stores, the company is also coming up with its own retail outlets. To increase the flexibility of operation, the brand is expanding its retail stores in different locations as chain stores. Clog London is looking forward to have a dedicated window for its products in India’s leading stores. Clog London is also planning to open its exclusive stores through franchisee network.

Team

Headquartered in Noida, Clog London has a dedicated designing team who are always out in the market researching, analyzing and studying the latest trends, along with the customer preferences and shopping patterns. This helps them in developing shoes that fit the demands and needs of the customers. As a result, the brand has been able to offer new styles and innovations every season which their clientele is looking for. **R**



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Building Effective Payment Check-out and Loyalty programs

The only mantra that drives retail today is a customer-first approach. If we apply this logic to every aspect of our management, we can effectively be future-proof as well. If we measure our success by our retail offerings in isolation, we may soon smudge ourselves into a non-distinctive space overlapping with 40-50% mall-retail brands being available at multiple touch points.

Hence our true success is driven by constantly answering the question - why patrons would still choose us over others. The only way to differentiate is via two critical factors - building experiences and added conveniences.

From a convenience perspective, we need to be able to offer the freedom to our patrons to offer multiple options of payment check-outs. Post, demonetization, we have seen a spurt in cashless transactions. With the growing number of fintech companies, touchless commerce through contact-less payment methods have increased even in the mall retail space. Net-banking, online cash transfers, mobile wallets, single touch payments, payment through scanning code, etc. have become an integral part of the payment check-out system across vendors in the shopping center. All targeted to build ease and convenience of purchase basis a preferred payment modality for the customer.

We still have ample ATM machines for convenience of withdrawing cash when needed as well. All of our stores offer cashless payment check-outs. Today, one can practically walk in to the mall without their wallet and only their mobile phones and have a complete shopping experience.

From an experience perspective, we invest a lot into building loyalty. At Select CITYWALK we have always positioned ourselves as a friend to the shoppers. Someone they can rely on, interact / experience and come back to for more every time. This loyalty is hard-earned and hence we realize it should also be rewarded. This is our basic ethos behind our loyalty program. Today a customer is bombarded with options and hence the fact that they skim above these options and choose to be loyal to us requires a justified program to cater to them.



GITANJALI SINGH
VICE PRESIDENT -
MARKETING,
SELECT CITYWALK


Traditional loyalty programs which are brand specific are limiting. However, if a shopping center curates a program bringing together more brands and benefits it calls for a more cohesive offering. The main objective is to get a good quality program in place. Simplicity is key here. The program should be easy to access and easy to engage with. The primary medium hence needs to be digital beyond the mall premise to extend the engagement beyond the shopping experience. Mobile loyalty apps are also gaining prominence due to ease and convenience to register and redeem when on the move. The program should also be easy to understand. An over complicated point-based system would not be as effective in this case. The program also needs

to be relevant to a variety of merchants across different categories like fashion, beauty, home and tech as well.

The loyalty program should also be constantly monitored with effective data points in the back end to support analysis. It can't be left to a one-time initiative but rather needs to be constantly tweaked and evolved basis the customers feedback. Making the program dynamic lends to its success.

But just only having such a program is not sufficient. It needs to be effectively communicated and activated for customers to sign on and be aware of the benefits. Online capture and in-mall promotions via posters, kiosks and concierge are essential.

At Select CITYWALK we run a comprehensive rewards program for our patrons. They earn reward points against shopping with partner brands which can be redeemed for gift vouchers. The idea is to shop, show invoices at the Rewards desk and receive rewards in the form of gifts vouchers from brands present in the shopping center. We have also embedded special birthday offers to expand our engagement. The response has been fantastic, and we keep adding new brands and worthy gifts to the scheme.

All these initiatives finally work towards a robust and long-term customer engagement. Understanding the pulse of the consumer is essential in being able to effectively provide comfort and convenience for a holistic mall experience. 

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