

## Retail Insight

How to create extraordinary or wow retail experience for shoppers.

Page 10

## Supply Chain Solutions

Retailers need to focus on data visibility and new store configurations.

Page 34

## Technology

Grocery stores are adopting cashierless technology for better checkout experience.

Page 16

# PROGRESSIVE GROCER

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INDIA EDITION

Page 26

**“FROM 54 STORES CURRENTLY, WE PLAN TO GROW TO 100 STORES BY 2022”**

– JAGAN MOHAN RAO  
CHAIRMAN AND MD, VIJETHA SUPERMARKETS

Page 38

## HONEY

Consumption is increasing thanks to its nutritive and medicinal values being increasingly highlighted and due to new flavour choices and variants introduced by brands.



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Grocery shopping today is in the midst of an evolution. Retailers are adopting a number of technology solutions to face the challenges of tomorrow and ensure a brighter future. In the modern grocery enterprise, adoption of technology and digital transformation involves embracing advanced digital tools that optimize decision-making, learns as it goes, recommends next-best actions, and moves at a faster speed than ever before.

Unlike the prior years, when technology was viewed as a necessary evil, grocers are embracing tech investment today as a hedge against fast moving competitors and a catalyst for growing revenue and earning the loyalty of omni-channel shoppers.

A big reason for the embrace of technology today is the growing maturity of off-the-shelf solutions, especially in such areas as merchandise management, the supply chain and labor management. Another reason is that cloud options offer grocers a new delivery model that can be less expensive and less burdensome to deploy for the IT department.

The embrace of digital transformation by grocers is a major theme playing out today and it spawns a large multi-phase, multi-year process. Although much work is being done to make grocery stores digitally ready and reliant, much more work lies ahead as grocers seek to grow their businesses in a highly competitive environment and meet the rising expectations of their customers.



Amitabh Taneja  
 Editor-in-Chief

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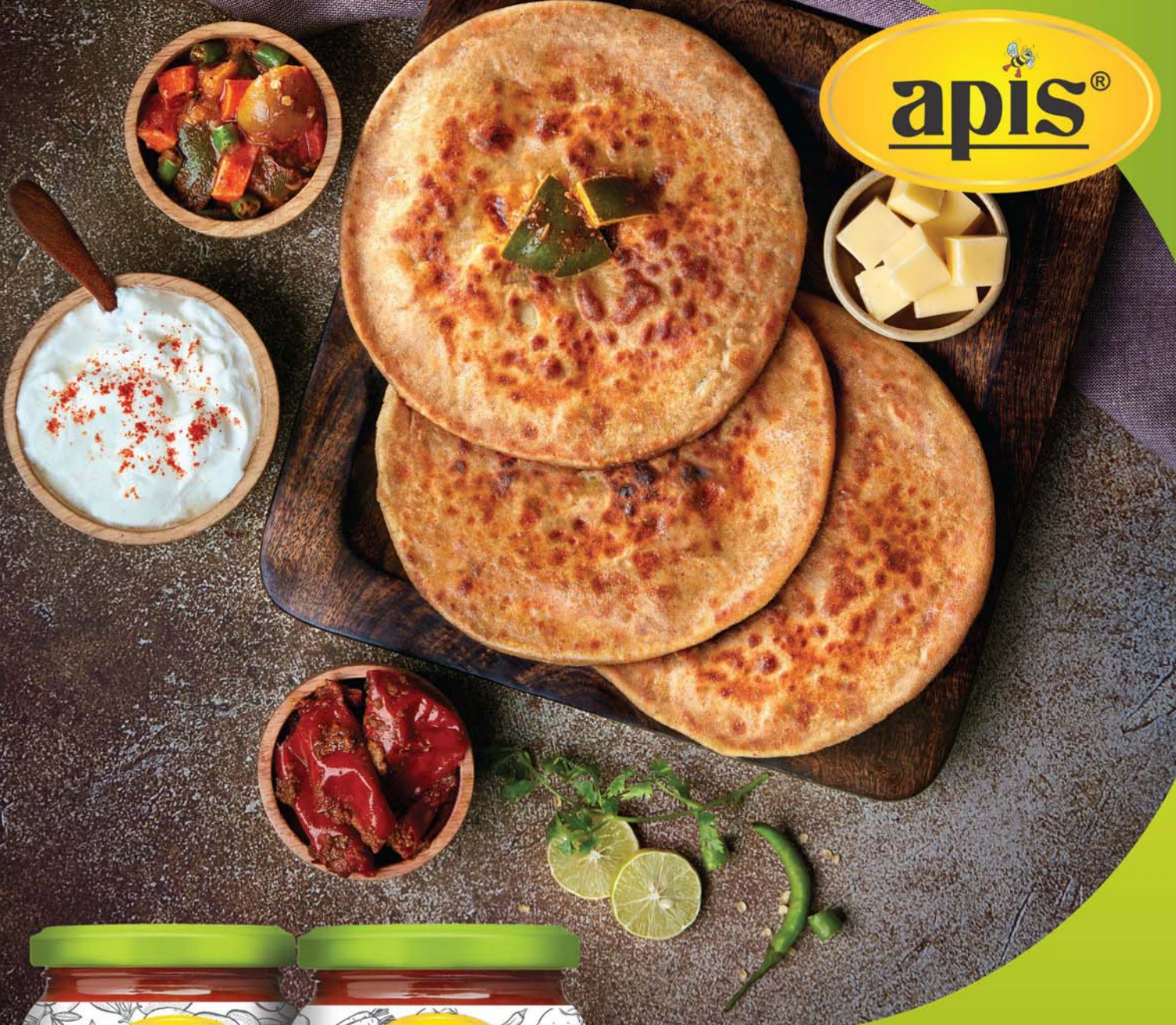
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### COVER STORY

26

→  
**Jagan Mohan Rao**  
Chairman and MD

#### “FROM 54 STORES CURRENTLY, WE PLAN TO GROW TO 100 STORES BY 2022”

Vijetha Supermarkets is among the biggest F&G retailers in Hyderabad with 54 stores spanning 2.5 lakh square feet in retail area. With 20 years of excellence in understanding customer needs and delivering fresh and quality groceries, the retailer has earned a reputation for offering fresh and high quality products at a reasonable price to the customers.

#### 10 INSIGHT

How to create extraordinary or wow retail experience for shoppers



#### 16 TECHNOLOGY CASHIERLESS STORES

Flushing Friction



#### 34 SUPPLY CHAIN SOLUTIONS

Next-Generation Considerations



#### 60 SOLUTIONS SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Life of the Party



#### 38 CATEGORY WATCH HONEY

Honey is an integral part of a healthy eating lifestyle



#### 8 ALL'S WELLNESS

Planning for Healthier Holidays



#### 62 BEVERAGE

Breakfast beverages well-placed with time-pressed Indian consumers



### IN EVERY ISSUE

#### 20 MARKET UPDATE

The latest news and industry updates



#### 72 WHAT NEXT

Major product launches in the past month



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# Planning for Healthier Holidays

Retailers can follow some simple marketing and merchandising tips during the festive season.

By Molly Hembree



**T**hinking about the holidays now can make you stand out as a retailer just as we're wrapping up summer. From Halloween to New Year's Day, this wonderful time of the year brings people together, beginning in your store aisles. Following are some plans to make the holidays healthier:

## Consider Dietary Restrictions

Many households have to consider food allergies and dietary preferences for themselves or guests over the holidays. Ask procurement and merchandising teams to ensure that free-from products are on the shelves and ready for festive party planning.

If there's a fight for shelf space, it may elevate sales to give prime real estate to a brand with fewer allergens or animal ingredients, thereby appealing to customers with allergies, intolerances and religious restrictions, or those eating plant-based diets.

## Rethink Your Drink

All of the things we consume make up our diets, including beverages. Holiday drinks are often synonymous with sugar, alcohol and/or calories. The 2019 International Food Information Council (IFIC) Foundation Food and Health Survey found that the primary way that most people have changed their diets over the past decade is by lowering sugar consumption (16 percent of respondents), while 80 percent of the survey-takers are trying to limit/avoid sugar.

To appeal to health-conscious consumers, offer tasty alternatives like low-fat eggnog, flavored seltzer water, sugar-free cocoa, light beer or spiced coffee. To make things even more exciting, serve up holiday cheer with a "mocktail" sampling event using sparkling water, cuts of fresh fruit, 100 percent juices, and herb combinations, to the background hum of jolly holiday music.

## Make Produce the Main Attraction

Flip holiday eating on its head: Make it healthier by featuring fruits and veggies as the MVPs, with proteins, grains and dairy in supporting roles.

Recharge your produce department with bright, fresh produce at a price point your shoppers can stock up on. Many produce-based holiday dishes,

**Many produce-based holiday dishes, including crudité, glazed carrots, stuffed acorn squash, tomato soup, roasted sweet potatoes and charred Brussels sprouts, can take center stage at mealtime while boosting nutrition and flavor.**

including crudité, glazed carrots, stuffed acorn squash, tomato soup, roasted sweet potatoes and charred Brussels sprouts, can take center stage at mealtime while boosting nutrition and flavor.

## Creative Use of Leftovers

Just like shoppers should plan how to use leftovers, as a retailer, you should plan how to attract shoppers with your "leftover" products from each of the recognized holidays.

Could extra mini candies from Halloween be perfect for a new pint-sized dessert idea to sample in-store? Would cornbread stuffing still on the shelf after Thanksgiving be the perfect filling for a hand pie recipe that could be printed and provided on the shelf edge? How about transferring extra boxes of instant mashed potatoes to the bistro counter for chefs to showcase as a crispy coating for proteins?

## Amp Up Your Online Presence

The usual harried nature of consumers over the holidays demands extra attention to anything that makes the shopping experience more pleasurable or easy. Do you have a recipe portal on your retailer site, or are there pickup or delivery options for purchasing groceries?

Now would be the perfect time to kick off a marketing campaign to encourage customers to use these resources, leaving them more time to do the things they really want. An added benefit is preliminary research showing that buying groceries online makes the grocery shopping experience more intentional and may increase the health of many customers' virtual "carts," without reducing their spend. **PG**

Molly Hembree, MS, RD, LD, is a registered dietitian coordinator for The Little Clinic and Kroger.








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Retailers have started focussing a lot on creating wow experiences for shoppers; yet, somehow, a mere 35%, or a third of shoppers, have had “an extraordinary” or “wow” retail experience, says a study by Wharton research.

By **Sunil Munshi**

## How to create extraordinary — or wow — retail experience for shoppers



**T**he topic of Retail experience has gained the most traction in the wake of digital era. This is not to say that the topic did not hold much credence in yesteryear market. However, a “wow” retail experience is the milestone that all the retailers are striving continuously to achieve as these form the formative steps in actualising repeat purchases in the short term and building brand equity in the long run.

A wow retail experience comprises five key elements:

- **Engagement:** It encompasses being polite, showing interest in helping, acknowledging and listening.
- **Executional Merits:** It includes explaining and advising, checking stock, assisting in finding products, having product knowledge and providing unexpected product quality.
- **Brand Experience:** Appealing store design and atmosphere, great product quality, making customers feel that they are always get a deal.
- **Expediting:** Being proactive in helping speed up the shopping process.
- **Problem Recovery:** Ability to resolve problems, upgrading quality and ensuring complete satisfaction.

The advent of internet has surpassed territorial borders, at least virtually! It has heralded a global marketplace where all sellers and buyers are online. It has also pushed technology innovation like chat bots, virtual reality, extended reality, gamification, etc, empowering both buyers and sellers for touch and feel experience and customer services. The Influencer community has been playing an effective role in building brand equity and pushing business. Deliberations on providing personalized & customized consumer experience has become significant in business meetings. A big chunk of marketing spends is diverted towards realizing this goal.

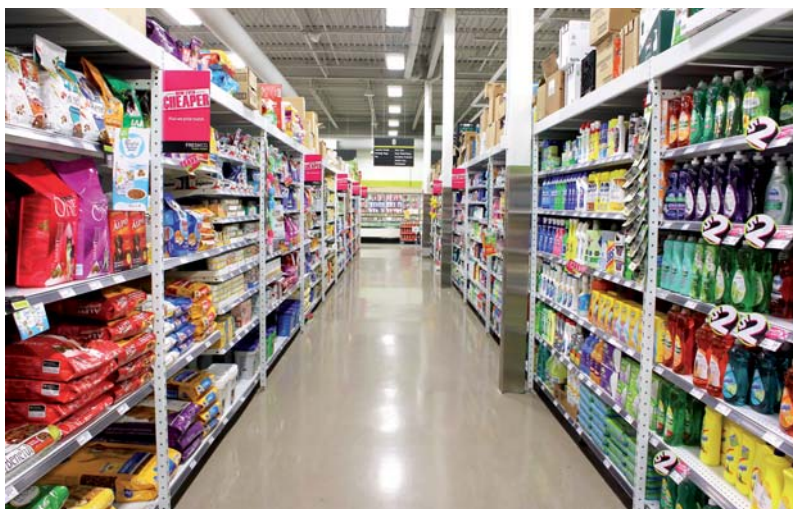
Technology has indeed reinvented the conventional visual merchandising realm – bringing about contrary changes in product launches, presentation and packaging. It has indeed broken the monotony of retail sales process. Statistics show that by 2020, global retail sales are anticipated to hit USD 27.73 trillion; so there’s clearly scope for brands to maximise profits and get a share of this growth in the next few years.

Visual merchandising is nothing but strategizing on how to make your product appear visually appealing. Capturing a buyers’ attention was never given so much importance till the time window shopping became popular and consumerism started making lethal business impact.

Visual merchandising plays a critical role in the look and feel of the product displayed. To a great extent, it also underlines the culture of a brand. Executed well, it helps in pushing purchases and stimulates brand loyalty. Some of the elements that make up for successful visual merchandising focuses on a store's appearance, signage, lighting, uniformity, point of sale material, and products' colour, shape, texture, packaging, ticketing and presentation. Each of these elements brings together in a retail setting the "wow" factor. Of course, these elements need to be complemented by human intervention in providing customer service and the desired customer engagement activities to move beyond that 'wow' experience and make a substantial contribution to the brand's kitty.

An effective store layout helps in directing your customers straight to your product. Hence, it is important to study your customer traffic flow to evaluate product placement strategies to ensure customer traffic and sales output.

- **Look at your Customer Journey:** Check if customer's physical interaction with your product adds to the in-store buying experience. Even if it is a certain packaging component, be sure it is visible on the style of shelf your product will be stocked on.
- **Support your Product's Narrative:** Whether it's a minute detail on your packaging, a strategic display, or the way your product looks side-by-side on a shelf, make sure it contributes to the larger narrative you are creating through your online presence and social media.
- **Advocate for Premium Shelf Space:** Look at your market share compared to your shelf space share. If your share of shelf space is lower than your share of the market, bring this up with the retailer to make a case for more space or premium placement. Requesting for prime spot can be a big ask, but if you have a good product and numbers to back it up, it can pay off. You may want to avail Retail Space Audit Services in case you want to enhance your presence in the existing ecosystem.



- **Avoid Out-of-Stocks:** If you're struggling with 'out of stock', first check to make sure it's not an ordering schedule issue. If it's not, and you can't increase your deliveries or production, it may be better to reduce your facings instead of leaving retailers with empty shelves. Frequent 'out of stock' occurrences could jeopardize your product's placement. Even worse, you're giving loyal customers opportunities to try competing products. In this case, you can probably opt for a Retail hygiene management tool that provides you complete visibility of your stock and keeps you updated to take necessary action on time.
- **Understand the Denial:** Before you make any changes to your retail merchandising strategy, look at your product, packaging and display tactics. Do they engage? Entertain? Educate? If it is a no then is it because the customer connects more with a competitor next to you on the shelf? Or is it because he doesn't get the answers for what he needs from your packaging, or maybe he just abandons the purchase cycle all together? If you can answer these questions, you'll be better at patching holes in your purchase funnel.
- It's a non-debatable fact, that an effective VM strategy and a full-proof execution of the same has the power to transform a mere memo-name into a brand, a first-time trial consumer into a loyalist and a simple yet thought-through plan into a successful case study. While the brand imagery becomes a playground for executing the visual merchandising nuances, the result is always an augmented revenue matrix. **PG**

**If your share of shelf space is lower than your share of the market, bring this up with the retailer to make a case for more space or premium placement.**

The writer is CEO, Denave India and APAC. Denave is a global sales enablement company, which takes a solution-conscious approach to deliver best practices in sales by leveraging people, processes, technology and innovation to drive revenue. Denave has reach across 5 continents, 50+ countries and 500+ cities globally.

# Winter Wonderland

Consumer demand for local, color and quality in the produce department is redefining what's in season.

By Jennifer Strailey

**V**ibrant colors, fresh flavors and locally sourced may not sound like wintertime in the produce department, but that's what today's consumer expects, and what progressive grocers are determined to deliver.

Traditionally, the vast majority of the country's winter produce has come from California and Arizona, but the rise in urban farming and greenhouse cultivation is dramatically changing the industry, allowing supermarket retailers and their supplier partners to create a destination for fresh — and increasingly local — produce year-round.

"All of the data we've collected in the last year indicates that demand for local has become even more important than that for organic, and that demand for local is outpacing supply," says Paul Lightfoot, CEO of BrightFarms, a New York-based greenhouse farmer, financier, builder and operations expert.

"Demand for local is every bit as significant as demand for organic, if not more so," affirms Steve Jarzombek, VP of produce merchandising and procurement for Mariano's Fresh Market, in Chicago.

Thanks to a partnership with BrightFarms, local greens, herbs and tomatoes are now everyday items

in Mariano's Illinois stores and most Pick 'n Save locations in Wisconsin (both banners are wholly owned subsidiaries of the Cincinnati-based Kroger Co.).

"Consumers want to make sure that farms in their own backyard are prospering," says Jarzombek. "They feel an allegiance to local farmers who grow food in their home state."

It's an emotional attachment, he explains, and one that doesn't cool with the season's first frost.

To deliver year-round peak-of-freshness product in less time, BrightFarms partners with grocers to build greenhouse farms near the retailers' store locations.

Inaugurated last year, the BrightFarms Chicagoland Greenhouse, in Rochelle, Ill., provides more than 1 million pounds of salad greens, herbs and tomatoes annually to the Kroger-owned grocery chains.

"There's also a perception of freshness and quality with something that was picked yesterday," asserts Jarzombek, "and it's true: The product does taste better."

Greens picked at the Rochelle greenhouse can reach a Mariano's produce case in under 24 hours.

"I don't know how much more fresh you can get," Jarzombek muses. "If you cut out four to five days of travel on the product, the quality is far superior, and customers recognize that."

"High-quality local produce jumps out at you in a way that nothing else does," Lightfoot concurs. "When retailers have a properly merchandised local salad program, it brings consumers into the salad category who weren't there before."

Mariano's offers five to six local BrightFarms salad blends on any given day. It also carries BrightFarms Basil, and will add Wheat Grass and a leaf lettuce blend in the near future.

"It's so cool to have a grower and a retailer working together, because you have different ideas about how to bring a product to market," notes Jarzombek. "We say, 'Here's what our customers are asking for — can you grow it?' And they do!"

BrightFarms, which produces 2 million pounds of mostly salad greens a year, currently operates three greenhouse farms: the Illinois location, as well as facilities in Virginia and Pennsylvania. Seeking to build a national brand of local produce, BrightFarms plans to build 10 to 15 more greenhouses over the next three to four years.

↓  
**GROWING SALES**  
A colorful display of BrightFarms greens attracts attention.



**Endless Summer**

This summer, Lunds & Byerlys, of Minneapolis, became one of the first customers of Urban Organics, a line of aquaponically grown organic greens. The St. Paul, Minn.-based grower currently supplies 10 Lunds & Byerlys stores with five varieties of greens.

Urban Organics' pioneering approach to indoor-grown produce allows Lunds & Byerlys to offer customers locally sourced organic greens all year long.

"As a locally owned company ourselves, we always try to support our local businesses and communities that we serve," says Rick Steigerwald, VP, fresh foods for Lunds & Byerlys. "With the Urban Organics line, we can offer the freshest product available, reduce food miles and — as an added benefit — [offer greens that] are certified organically grown.

"While we have not had the line during the winter months as of yet, I do believe the product will do even

better during the winter, as customers start missing that summer-fresh salad," he continues.

With promising initial sales, Lunds & Byerlys plans to introduce Urban Organics greens to its remaining stores as supplies become available.

Urban Organics launched in 2014 with an 8,500-square-foot facility inside an old St. Paul brewery complex, and recently expanded its operations with the opening of an 87,000-square-foot facility inside the former Schmidt brewery. When the new indoor farm reaches full capacity later this year, it will provide 275,000 pounds of fresh fish and 475,000 pounds of produce per year to the surrounding region.

Part of what makes the vertical farming model so revolutionary is the flexibility and speed with which it can respond to changes in customer demand.



**FRESH FROM THE CITY**  
Lunds & Byerlys encourages customers to "eat local" with Urban Organics.

➔ **PEAR INDUSTRY EYES AVOCADOS**

With the year-round availability of berries, grapes and other fruits grown around the world, competition in the fruit category, even in the winter, is fierce.

"There's been such an influx of new product items," observes Brianna Shales, communications manager at Stemilt Growers, in Wenatchee, Wash. "Berries have exploded, there are many new apple varieties — there's so much more competition, and pears are definitely feeling the impact of that."

Hoping to renew shopper confidence in the category, Stemilt recently launched an Operation Flavor initiative that looks at how pears perform throughout the supply chain, following a decade of pear category decline in the produce department.

From maturation to ripening protocols, to partnering with retailers that also want to elevate the pear category, Stemilt is examining its entire supply chain.

Shales explains, "We're asking ourselves, 'Are we delivering that awesome pear experience?'"

The program is still in its infancy, but Stemilt expects the initiative to bring positive change over the course of the next several years.

"We use the avocado industry as an example of where we'd like to see this go," says Shales, referring to that category's focus on selling ripe fruit. "Proper ripening is really important, as we go into the holidays, with Anjou pears," she adds. "It's the way to ensure that you are selling a full-flavored pear."

Signage and knowledgeable employees are also critical to increasing holiday pear sales, according to Shales. "Tell customers to check the neck," she advises. "If it yields to pressure, it is ready to go."



"We can change out a crop and have a new one in production 28 to 35 days later on most crops," explains Dave Haider, Urban Organics' co-founder.

Currently, Urban Organics offers nine varieties of organic greens packed in clamshells. At Lunds & Byerlys, the Twin Kales blend has been the best seller.

"Urban farming is becoming more prevalent all over the country," observes Steigerwald. "The category has grown considerably over the last few years, and there are many new offerings that will become available in the near short term."



**CLOSE TO HOME**  
Signage tells shoppers that Little Leaf Lettuce is grown nearby.

**The Inside Scoop**

Little Leaf Farms is another indoor grower undergoing rapid expansion in response to skyrocketing demand for local produce year-round.

Just two years after launching a technologically advanced greenhouse for hydroponically grown baby lettuce in its headquarters of Devens, Mass., the company is doubling its operations, expanding to 220,000 square feet.

"We are changing the game in regards to freshness, taste and quality," asserts Paul Sellew, founder and CEO of Little Leaf. "Our product is harvested and



**TRACTOR PULL**  
**Wonderful Halos'**  
**cart-stopping tractor**  
**display suggests fruit**  
**fresh from the grove.**

in the store within 24 hours, which gives the retailers much more time to sell the product.”

In addition to packages featuring the “Massachusetts Grown” message, Little Leaf works with grocers to promote how far away from a particular store its product is grown — often less than 30 miles.

Already offering green leaf, red leaf and arugula, the company is currently exploring romaine, kale and



spinach. It distributes to all of the northeastern states, with a particular focus on the Boston market.

“Indoor hydroponically grown product is earning its place in the market,” notes Sellew. “It allows year-round locally grown product in areas that have harsh winters, like New England, but the bottom line is that you have to produce a great product and be competitively priced [to have a] place in the market.”

**Farming Futures**

Is produce grown indoors the way of the future? Most observers agree that it will play an increasingly important role in our food supply, particularly when it comes to highly perishable products like greens.

“We have a huge population living east of the Mississippi, while most of the food is grown west of the Mississippi,” says Jarzombek, of Mariano’s. “People have also begun eating a lot more produce in the last five to 10 years, and they will eat a lot more in the next five to 10. Growing in more parts of the country is good for the future of the produce business.”

**Healthy Holidays**

There’s a bounty of anxiously awaited produce grown in the great outdoors that will be in season and on trend this winter, and The Wonderful Co., of Los Angeles, is ready to celebrate with colorful campaigns for the holidays and beyond.

“We bring a lot of color to the produce department — the green of Wonderful Pistachios, the orange of Halos, and the red of pomegranate arils and juice,” says Adam Cooper, VP of marketing for The Wonderful Co.

At presstime, Wonderful Halos was poised to launch Grove of Goodness, its biggest ever in-store POS program. Featuring a display tractor that holds boxes of Wonderful Halos, the program also includes a smaller-footprint grove tree display for secondary placements in the lobby and checkout.

This year, The Wonderful Co. is anticipating its best-selling holiday ever. “Our five biggest selling days a year are the five leading up to Christmas,” notes Cooper. “We had record Christmas sales last season with Halos and Pistachios, as people use both for entertaining and stocking stuffers, and we expect to exceed those sales this year.”

Snowy sled creative is ready for a December Halos push, while equally colorful programs are slated for January (the most important month for premium juice sales), football season, the Super Bowl, Valentine’s Day, Easter and beyond. **PG**

**NEW POTATO STUDY**  
**SPOTLIGHTS SALES DRIVERS**

Potatoes are an important year-round staple, as well as a holiday season must-have. Offering the right mix, however, can mean the difference between sales or no sales, according to a new study from Denver-based Potatoes USA.

With the goal of helping retailers optimize the potato category and drive sales, the study, conducted in partnership with Norwalk, Conn.-based Kantar Retail, overlaid 52 weeks of Nielsen data with data from 50 million frequent shoppers.

It found that an overwhelming 93 percent of all fresh potato dollar sales at retail are from bagged or bulk potatoes.

“We’ve seen a tendency in the marketplace to switch attention to single wrap, trays, microwavable steamers, etc., and while these are also important, some retailers have forgotten how many dollars are attributable to the bagged and bulk segment,” says Ross Johnson, global marketing manager for Potatoes USA. “There’s an opportunity to drive growth with areas they’ve long depended on, if they allocate shelf space accordingly.”

Looking at SKU share or IPC codes across the United States, the study found that the small convenience-potato category (under 4 pounds) represents 63 percent of shelf space, but only 30 percent of dollar sales. Meanwhile, the industry has seen a significant reduction in shelf space devoted to larger pack sizes.

“The 10-pound bag takes up 5 percent of shelf space, but it represents 12 percent of dollar incremental sales,” notes Johnson.

What’s more, the study revealed that when grocers don’t stock 10-pound bags, 12 out of every 100 customers won’t buy potatoes at all.

“Ten-pound bags are even more

important during the holidays,” asserts Johnson, adding that customers aren’t inclined to buy two 5-pound bags instead.

The disappearance of larger potato-pack sizes in some grocery stores is shifting buyers to club stores, Johnson continues. The total U.S. performance of the fresh potato category shows that 10-pound bags were up 11.5 percent in volume in July 2017, and up 13.6 percent in volume in August 2017.

Eye-catching potato displays in multiple and high-traffic areas of the store can help drive sales during the holidays and beyond.

With this in mind, Houston-based MountainKing Potatoes has created a host of colorful merchandisers, as well as high-graphic packaging, to increase sales.

“Potatoes are traditionally merchandised in a destination location, where you have to go look for them,” observes John Pope, VP of marketing for MountainKing Potatoes. “They’re tucked away in a corner of the grocery store.”

He continues: “We’ve discovered that the use of secondary displays, display-ready cases and sleeves — when properly located in produce or in another area of the store where customers are shopping for center-of-the-plate protein — results in an increase in sales. It’s about making potatoes an impulse purchase rather than a destination.”

Usage suggestions are also critical to increasing potato sales. Through its custom-designed tags, packaging and high-graphic bins, MountainKing offers seasonal and holiday suggestions such as a quick and simple recipe for stuffed Jumbo Russets in October, classic Butter Gold mashed potatoes in November, and roasted Butter Reds in December.



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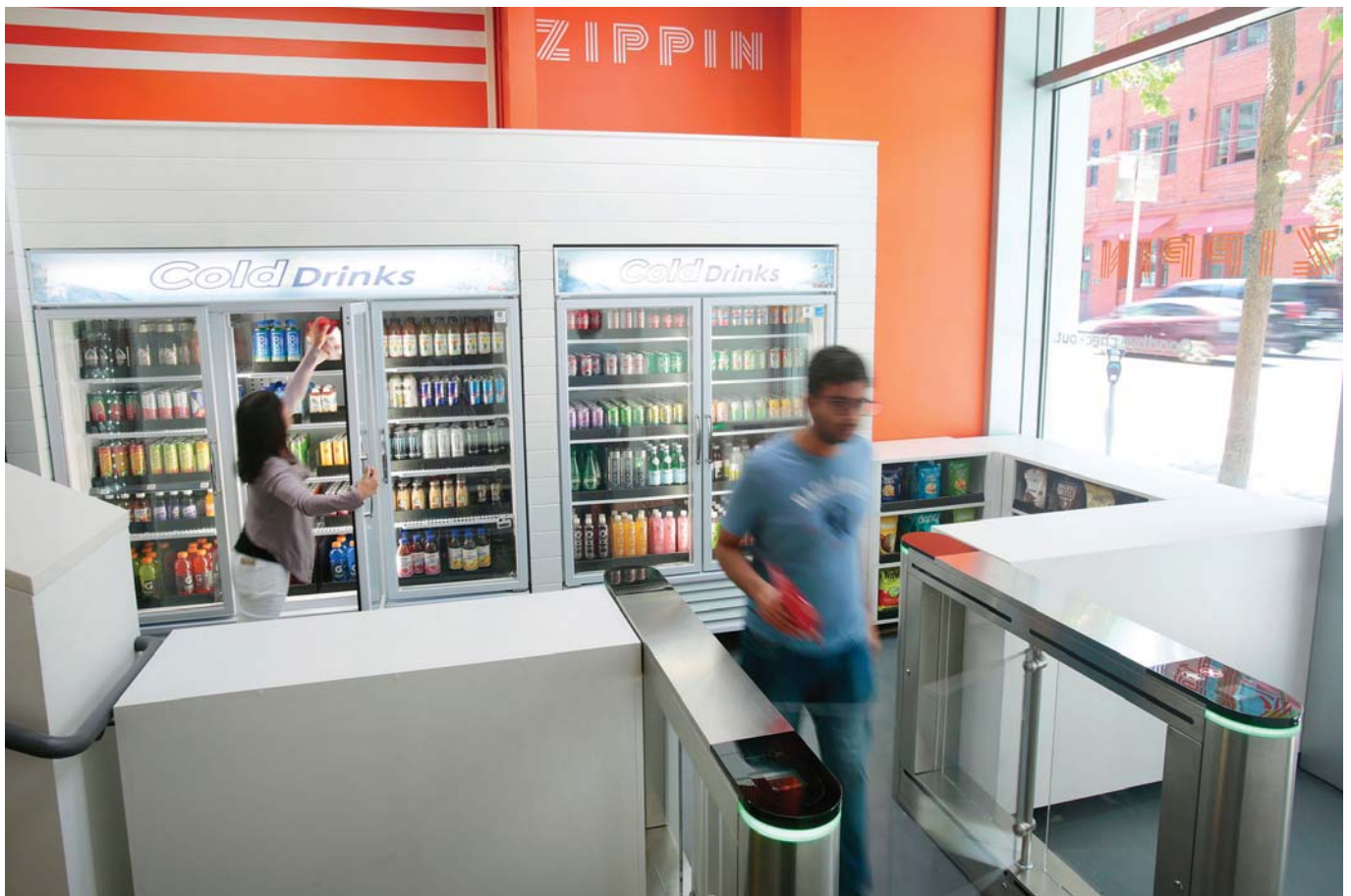


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A Zippin store in San Francisco demonstrates the company's shelf sensor and camera technologies that allow customers to walk in and walk out, without a checkout.

# Flushing Friction

Checkout-free or cashierless technologies inch closer to implementation in large grocery retail.

By **Abby Kleckler**

**W**hen the first Amazon Go store opened to the public in January 2018, the concept seemed magical to many. Shoppers can walk into the store; grab whatever they'd like; put it in coat pockets, bags or elsewhere; and simply walk out. All the customers need is an app.

Fast-forward not even two years, and Amazon plans to open 3,000 cashierless stores, with many other players entering the category in a big way. These tech companies have their sights not only on 2,000- or 3,000-square-foot convenience stores, but also on grocery stores 10 times that size or larger.

Grocery has long tried to solve the friction of the checkout experience. From opening more registers to implementing self-service kiosks, no

solutions have yet to fully satisfy both the retailer and the customer.

"The problem has been known for a while that the checkout experience has been steadily becoming more and more frustrating, starting from the time when barcodes were introduced," says Krishna Motukuri, CEO of San Francisco-based checkout-free technology company Zippin. "As labor costs go up and retailers face intense pressure on their margins, it's only gotten worse."

Checkout-free technology could be the answer. In Phonic's "2019 Store of the Future Report," nearly nine out of 10 Americans (86 percent) said that mobile apps will allow people to scan groceries as they shop and then pay through an app in the next five years.



“Right now, what we’re seeing in grocery is kind of this transition where experience really matters for the end user,” says Ahmed Beshry, co-founder of Caper, a Brooklyn, N.Y.-based provider of smart shopping carts. “Unlike 10 years ago, if I’m in a grocery store and the experience is bad, I don’t have to go through the whole painful process of waiting in line.”

As checkout-free continues to inch closer to traditional grocery, these technologies aim to maximize benefits for both the retailer and customer.

“No. 1, there is a new level of acceptance of technology in retail spaces, because grocers are looking to differentiate and create a better shopper experience,” says Andy Radlow, chief marketing officer for Berkeley Calif.-based checkout-free technology company Grabango. “The second thing is that this introduction of technology is heightening competition, and that competition is very bottom-line driven.”

“You’re talking about businesses on a legacy basis that are 1 to 3 percent net-profit businesses, but very high-revenue businesses,” Radlow continues. “There implies a tremendous opportunity to increase net profits because there’s revenue there, but they haven’t been able to unlock the profits before the introduction of these new technology opportunities that exist in the space today.”

**Different Form Factors**

All three of the companies quoted above, along with other large players in the industry, offer different checkout-free technologies. Let’s look at Caper, Grabango and Zippin’s most fundamental attributes as options for grocers to retrofit their existing stores.

Caper uses a smart shopping cart with built-in sensors. Customers currently scan the item and place it in the cart, with a screen on the cart keeping track of purchases and interacting with shoppers. Item recognition is also in the works to replace the need to scan.

“When I talk about the simplicity of rolling out our product, the retailers don’t need to put a single screw into their walls, and for shoppers, they do not need to download a single app.” Beshry says.

**Key Takeaways**

- ▶ Cashierless technology could be the answer to the frustrations often experienced by supermarket shoppers when checking out their groceries.
- ▶ Various checkout-free technologies that are now available aim to maximize benefits for both the retailer and customer.
- ▶ Improved customer service, lower shrink and an abundance of data are pluses for retailers, while customers enjoy a seamless, convenient, more personalized shopping experience.

Grabango, which is working closely with three of the top 30 grocers on Progressive Grocer’s Super 50 list and one of the top 10 convenience stores, assigns every shopper a “virtual basket” when they walk through the door. The technology company uses a proprietary hardware, called “G rails,” which includes a high number of low-cost sensors lined up and down the aisles.

“[The G rails] almost look like a fluorescent lamp fixture, and we colorize them to match the color tone designed by the store, so they truly disappear into the ceiling of the retail store itself,” Radlow says. “Customers feel more comfortable. They don’t feel observed; they feel absolutely at ease within the shopper space.”

Zippin, which operates an Amazon Go rival store in San Francisco to display its technology, has a cashierless system that uses multiple sources of information, both cameras and shelf sensors, to triangulate and receive the correct information.

“All of our technology is designed to be retrofitted into existing stores, so our hardware choices — specifically how the sensors and cameras work — are designed to work with existing stores’ power and internet infrastructure,” Motukuri says.

**Retailer Advantages**

There are a number of reasons retailers may find checkout-free systems to be the answer to increased profits, including, but not limited to, fewer employees behind the register, a reduction in theft by fraud, and new customer data like they’ve never had in the past.

In a cashierless system, retailers will have to pay fewer people to stand behind the register, and can instead empower these employees on a different level.

“Any second their employee stands at a grocery store checkout and scans product is actually a waste for the retailer. In fact, many retailers try to make the best of it and have the cashier ask if they found everything, but in reality that’s too late in the experience,” Motukuri says. “We think that grocers will be better able to use their employees by having them provide more customer service and help with the discovery of products much earlier in the shopping experience, when customers enter and are walking the aisles.”

Employees will still need to approve some items, however, such as alcoholic beverages, before customers exit the store.

Also, whether it’s a 1 percent or a 4 percent revenue issue for a store, shrink can wreak havoc on a grocer with already tight margins. With camera-based checkout-free systems, shrink by fraud is nearly eliminated.



↑ Caper’s smart shopping cart eliminates the checkout without changing the store’s infrastructure.

“Right now, what we’re seeing in grocery is kind of this transition where experience really matters for the end user.”

— Ahmed Beshry  
Caper

“Hiding a product or products on your body no longer exists,” Radlow asserts. “Every product is associated with somebody when it makes its way out of the store, whether you’re a customer or a worker at the store.”

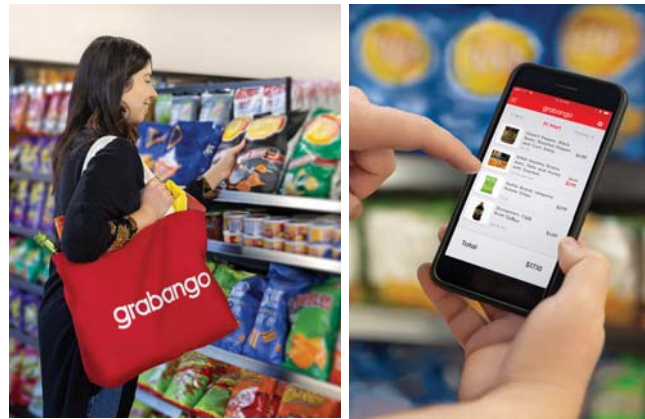
Another benefit of these technologies in the stores is a large amount of data that retailers can use to maximize square footage, improve the shopper experience and boost sales.

“We want to know where people are spending time within your store, where they’re not going, maybe what’s an effective aisle, or if my end caps are converting better than my items on my aisles,” Beshry says. “There’s a lot that we can aggregate over time.”

Zippin’s system of shelf sensors and cameras knows what’s on every shelf, meaning that it can notify retailers immediately when a shelf is running out of a product, or when a customer has misplaced a product or put it on the wrong shelf.



A Giant Eagle store is currently piloting Grabango’s checkout-free technology, the first large-format U.S. grocery store to implement the system.



**Difficult-to-Handle Items**

Grocery is a highly dynamic retail environment with end caps changing on a regular basis, both store-specific and CPG promotions running simultaneously, new products or fresh packaging on products filtering in and out, fresh and prepared food options increasing, and much more.

“To change the entire logistics and stocking process around your new computer vision system is unrealistic,” Radlow says. “Our system dynamically alerts when new items are introduced, and then kicks off a process by which those items are correlated with a SKU list for that store, properly priced, itemized, recognized and then communicated with all other stores within the portfolio for that client.”

Caper has a certified weight sensor in its cart for these types of items, according to Beshry, while Zippin’s shelf sensors can detect a change in weight and relay that to the system, Motukuri notes.

**Shopper Benefits**

Even if the retailer sees the benefits of a cashierless system, today customers must respond favorably for it to be successful.

**Radlow says it best:** “Our mission is to eliminate lines and save people time.”

Far and away, the primary benefit for customers is that they can walk into the store, grab what they need and walk out.

Another benefit, however, is that customers can receive personalized promotions and experiences within the store. Caper, for example, can recommend products and recipes on the shopping cart’s screen, based on the particular items in the cart.

Caper is also working on a technology that would enable consumers to create a shopping list all week on an app. Then, when they arrive at the store, they would hold it in front of the sensor on the cart, and it would import immediately, so they don’t forget any groceries.

Through the apps, retailers can also recommend promotions or coupons based on previous purchases, all aimed at increasing the shopper experience and making trips to the grocery store more enjoyable.

“The biggest benefit to a grocery retailer is certainly delighted shoppers,” Motukuri says. “Any time you have shoppers who are delighted with the experience, it’s a benefit to grocers.” **PG**

**BEYOND SPEED ALONE**

Making the experience faster is a key component of solving many checkout pain points, but an automated solution could solve other concerns, too, such as guaranteeing that your customers never walk out with an expired product.



Enter RFID as one possible option. Each item is tagged with an RFID label, and shoppers wheel their carts or place their bags in the checkout area, with no need to scan each item.

“What we’re showing with RFID is, you solve the queueing issue, you can solve the food safety issue, and the third area is about expiration management,” says Ryan Yost, VP/general manager of the printer solutions division of Glendale, Calif.-based Avery Dennison. “Since you have item-level visibility, you connect dates to RFID, so you can tell the consumer immediately at checkout that one of the items has expired. It won’t charge you for that, and it’ll ask you to dispose of it, or if it’s about to expire, we’ve talked to some grocers, and they can put a discount on it if they still want to purchase it.”

RFID technology also has the potential to give grocers a leg up against the competition, helping them make a commitment against recalled products, or at least offering them an answer other than the nightly news.

“If I do sell you something that is later recalled, I can immediately reach out to you if you’re part of a loyalty program and let you know that you bought something in my store that was recalled, please dispose of it, and I’ll credit your account,” Yost explains.

Right now, grocers and convenience stores must apply the RFID labels themselves. Therefore, most have chosen to start with small grab-and-go areas of the store, but Yost envisions a long-term strategy of working with brands to tag items, so on receipt, there will be very little work for grocers.

“I would say grocery is still two to three years away from having every item in grocery RFID tagged,” Yost says. “I do believe there will be sections of grocers that are designed for grab and go before that.”

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# Market Update

## RedSeer and Bigbasket online grocery report says market to grow 55% to \$10.5 billion by 2023

RedSeer Consulting & Bigbasket have come out with a first of its kind Online Food & Grocery report – a comprehensive study that delves into various customer segments, online shopping trends, city-wise penetration and price elasticity displayed by consumers across different retail channels. The Report will serve as a comprehensive compilation of the Indian online grocery retail market and its findings and data-sets will act as a reference for FMCG brands, research companies, marketers, venture capitalists and industry experts looking to suss out insights and important trends and developments marking India's online F&G industry.

The RedSeer-Bigbasket report, which was released recently, says that India's online food and grocery retail currently accounts for just 0.2% of the overall market but is expected to touch \$10.5 billion or 1.2% of the overall

market by 2023, driven by an increased assortment of products and efforts like express delivery operations. The report also mentions that the average retail shopper has a household income of more than Rs.12 lakh per annum and falls under the age category of anywhere between 30 and 40 years. It says that a retail shopper buys online at least once a month with an average online transaction value of Rs. 900-1200. Around 35-40% of the shopper's retails spends from online channels, another 30% to 40% of the retail spends are across local kirana stores, while the rest 20% to 30% of the spends is registered across modern retail formats such as organized brand stores, chain stores, and hypermarkets.

According to RedSeer, India's modern retail penetration is currently at 10% or \$82 billion of the overall retail sector, which is currently estimated at \$805 billion as of 2018. This organized share is expected to grow at 20% over the next few years to achieve



**Hari Menon,**  
Co-Founder & CEO, Bigbasket



**Anil Kumar,**  
Founder, RedSeer Consulting

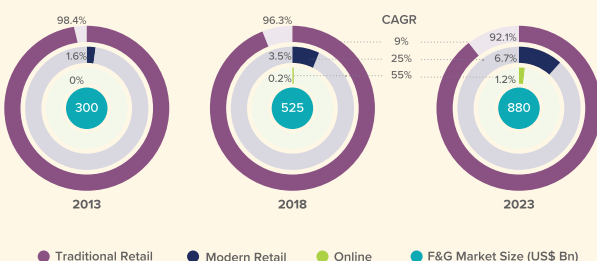
a penetration of 11.8% or \$118 billion by 2020 and 14.7% or \$204 billion by 2023. However, online retail still held a minor 3% market share in 2018 and is expected to touch 4.6% share by 2020, and 7% by 2023, according to RedSeer data. Increased customer comfort and trust in e-tailing, especially across segments such as electronics and fashion coupled with a strong push by e-grocery players are expected to drive the growth in online retail. Although though India's modern retail segment has considerable ground to cover, it is still growing at a slower pace compared to other geographies, RedSeer added in its report.

Commenting on the report, Hari Menon, Co-Founder and CEO, Bigbasket, said: "The online grocery segment has been one of the fastest-growing e-commerce verticals in India and will continue to flourish in both metro and non-metro cities in the years to come. Given the lack of concrete data around user patterns, growth trends

and consumer preferences related to online as well as offline grocery retail, we decided to partner with RedSeer Consulting to launch this report."

Anil Kumar, Founder, RedSeer Consulting, said: "The share of modern retail segment will jump from 3.5 percent now to 6.7% in 2023 and the online channel will witness 55% growth lending to a sizable \$10.5 billion market by 2023. This retail food & grocery report offers comprehensive coverage across 40 categories marking key consumption sectors of a typical grocery basket. The unique insights cover how online platform facilitates the creation of niche sub-categories as well as the evolution of challenger brands." "This food & grocery compendium will enable brands to define potential consumer segments as well as index categories for scale, growth and premiumization," added Pakhi Saxena, Head – Retail & CPG, RedSeer Consulting.

### FOOD & GROCERY RETAIL CHANNEL SPLIT – INDIA



## Fast&Up is nutrition partner for Gokulam Kerala FC for second consecutive season

Fast&Up – the flagship sports nutrition brand of Aeronutrix Sports Products Private Limited – has been signed on as nutrition partner by I-League club Gokulam Kerala FC. The I-League team had also partnered with Fast&Up during the 2018-19 season. Gokulam, which made its debut in the 2017-18 I-League season, earned the nickname ‘Giant Killers’ after it beat established clubs such as Mohun Bagan and East Bengal. Earlier, this year, Gokulam trounced Mohun Bagan 2-1 in the finals to win the Durand Cup. Earlier, the club had stunned Bangladesh Premier League champions Bashundhara Kings 3-1 in the Sheikh Kamal International Cup in Bangladesh. With a good pre-season track record, Gokulam are expected to be strong title contenders this season.

**President of Gokulam Kerala FC VC Praveen** said: “It’s great to associate with Fast&Up. We had a great last season with them, the players and our coaches had been very happy with the products and for us it made sense to go ahead with Fast&Up once again. The relationship has been very organic and we look forward to a great season with them on board.” **Gokulam Kerala FC CEO Dr. B Ashok Kumar** said Fast&Up has helped the players to understand more about the importance of nutrition and avoid potential injuries. “Their products have helped the players to improve drastically when compared to our previous seasons. This was reflected in our recent performances on the field,” he said.



**Fast&Up CEO Vijayaraghavan Venugopal** said he was happy that Gokulam Kerala FC have trusted Fast&Up to be their nutrition partner for the second year in a row. “The trust that Gokulam have placed on us is amazing. It shows how Fast&Up is trusted by athletes to enhance performance. I hope Gokulam have a fantastic season and win the I-league title.” Fast&Up is in partnership with over 100 Indian athletes, which include Indian cricketer Mayank Agarwal, Priya Punia, ace Indian swimmer Srihari Nataraj, India’s highest ranked table tennis player Sathiyana Gnanasekaran and footballer Iain Hume, among several other reputed stars.

Backed by innovative Swiss technology, Fast&Up caters to performance in sport, intelligent nutrition and dietary supplementation for an active lifestyle and is one of the very few companies in India with the Informed Sport certification, which makes it the trusted choice of athletes and fitness enthusiasts across the country.



## Reliance backed Fynd launches direct-to-retail solution

Reliance backed Fynd has launched Uniket – a unique direct-to-retail solution – which enables shopkeepers in Tier-II and Tier-III cities to grow their business by getting direct access to the brand’s inventory and the flexibility to buy anytime, anywhere and in any configuration they like. With core USPs of “Directly from Brands”, “Original Bill” and “Assured Returns”, Uniket enables a shopkeeper to buy in single pieces rather than buying complete sets from a typical wholesale market.

Through Uniket, Fynd also provides shopkeepers with their own free website and app with selling capability of over 50,000+ styles from 50+ brands. Shopkeepers no longer need to worry about customers leaving their shop dissatisfied due to a lack of choices in their favorite brands. By downloading the Uniket store app, shopkeepers can now keep a minimal inventory and that too of all the brands that are of high demand in their shop and also offer delivery of these branded and quality stocks to their customers’ doorstep.

With a growing share of India’s \$700 billion retail market venturing offline, Uniket wants to empower shopkeepers through its technology solutions and help them offer the services at par with the organized retailers in large malls. Commenting on Uniket, **Harsh Shah, Co-founder at Fynd**, said: “Brick and mortar stores still significantly dominate sales globally. By partnering with Uniket, shopkeepers can further grow their business and drive a wave of modernization by embracing technology. Uniket store app offers up to 45% margin on bulk orders and 15% commission on customer orders. Through Fynd Store, we are already able to help organized retail stores in metro cities get extra visibility and drive sales. With Uniket, our aim is to tap the unorganized retail market, support shopkeepers and offer seamless shopping experience to customers across the country.”

Uniket has on-boarded 6,500+ stores and has established its presence in 350+ cities across 24 states across India. In over 1,700 pin codes of India, Uniket has more than one shopkeeper using its buying platform. In the next 6 months, Uniket plans to target 60,000+ stores in 800+ cities, covering all states of the country.

## Lee Kum Kee sauces stir up Oriental flavors in India



A 'Culinary Cooking Master Class' was organised at Food Hall, Santacruz Mumbai by celebrity chef Varun Inamdar and Lee Kum Kee – the makers of authentic Chinese sauces and condiments. The cooking class ran to a packed house with audience ranging from all age groups, gender and even the millennials wanting a taste of their favourite food.

Two times National award winner and Guinness World Record holder chef Varun Inamdar, who also wears the

mantle of being the chosen chef for Presidential and Prime Ministerial visits to India, curated the dishes at the Masterclass. "One of the reasons for Chinese cuisine's increasing popularity in India is its ease of making and ingredient sourcing. And the key to perfecting the dish is in choosing the right sauces and condiments, which brings out the authentic oriental flavours. When you use Lee Kum Kee products, I guarantee you that it can't get more Chinese than this," he said, whose words carry the weight of authority when it comes to replicating authenticity in foreign cuisines.

With its entry in India, Lee Kum Kee – a century-old ethnic enterprise – looks to promoting and celebrating authentic Chinese culinary culture in the Indian kitchens. With a heritage spanning over three decades, Lee Kum Kee sauces and condiments have gained worldwide repute and the trust of millions of customers as high-grade products. The brand offers a wide range of products that can be used to create an eclectic mix of Chinese dishes that suit the Indian palate without compromising on the originality of oriental flavours.



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## Growing sustainability concerns to shape Indian soft drinks industry

Ethical living is a crucial trend currently influencing consumer preferences and driving new product development in soft drinks in India, according to global market research company Euromonitor International.

Mounting concerns about single-use plastic in India will fuel the ethical living trend in soft drinks as consumers become more conscious about their purchases. According to Euromonitor International's lifestyles survey 2019, 67% of digitally connected consumers from India identify themselves as environmentally conscious or eco-friendly with purchases leaning towards natural, organic and recyclable products.

"Trends in packaged food and beverages tend to set precedence for other fast-moving consumer goods categories, and we can already see the ethical living trend influencing purchases in the beauty and personal care industry as well," says Amulya Pandit, senior research analyst at Euromonitor International. According to Euromonitor International, the Indian soft drinks industry reached 22.8 billion litres in total volume sales in 2018 and is expected to grow by 14.9% in 2018-2023.

"It is important for companies and brands to recognise these megatrends and set-up short and long-term strategies to tackle these shifts in consumer demand," concludes Pandit.

## Pride Of Cows to introduce new milk variants

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

Pride of Cows offers the best cow milk in every way — bottled and delivered fresh, chilled to 4 degree Celsius, to your doorstep through a process that is completely mechanized from start to finish. This ensures that you reap all the benefits of milk. Priced at Rs. 95 per litre in Mumbai and Rs. 120 per litre in Delhi-NCR, consumers can subscribe to the premium milk on the Pride of Cows website by undergoing an online registration process.

Unlike any other milk, Pride of Cows is not sourced from farmers. With their own 3,800 Holstien Friesian cows, there is complete control over the breed, feed and health of cows, which in turn leads to complete control over the quality of milk. The milk is instantly pasteurized, chilled and packaged in bottles and sent on its way to consumers, in a process that is mechanized, maintaining absolute purity and keeping the taste, structure and nutrients of the milk intact.

With a belief that milk plays a significant part in strengthening and protecting the body and mind to live a fuller and more complete life each day, the brand represents cow's milk as a pinnacle of nutrition and health. Located in the lush greenery of Manchar, close to Pune, the Pride of Cows dairy farm is spread over 26 acres, perched between the Bheema River and the Bheemeshwari hills. The farm is equipped with the finest international technology for feeding, milking and processing, conforming to international dairy practices.



## Bengaluru tops Karnival.com's 2019 Sustainability Index

India's fast growing e-commerce platform Karnival.com has announced its maiden Sustainability Index for Indian cities. Based on an analysis of the shopping behaviour of over 20,000 respondents, across five Indian metros, the study revealed that Bengaluru is the most conscious city when it comes to buying eco-friendly and sustainable products as compared to other metro cities in India. Mumbai is at the second spot followed by Delhi, Hyderabad and Chennai respectively.

Supported by The Better India, Karnival.com is India's first curated e-commerce platform that promotes environment friendly and sustainable products. Interestingly, 55 per cent of the shoppers on Karnival.com are millennials (23-37 age group) and Generation Z (18-22 age group). The first-of-its-kind study analysing people's purchasing behaviour found that tier 2 and tier 3 Indian cities are

warming up to the idea of shopping for sustainable products. Pune led the growing tribe of 'green non-metros', while Coimbatore, Lucknow and Ghaziabad completed the top chart, accounting for nearly 10 per cent of the total sales on Karnival.com during April-September 2019.

Commenting on Karnival.com's 2019 sustainability index, **Dhimant Parekh – CEO, Karnival.com**, said: "The maiden sustainability index by Karnival.com shows that Indians are working towards creating a culture of conscious consumption and making sustainability a mainstream way of life. It's heartening to know that young shoppers, in metros as well as non-metros, are looking for eco-friendly choices, whether for their own use or for gifting purposes."

The study also indicated that more women were open to buying these products than men – the percentage



was 65 per cent for women and 35 for men. The most popular buys on the platform include water-saving devices for taps, home decor products made with upcycled and recycled materials, natural personal care products such as bamboo toothbrushes and reusable steel straws, organic food products from different regions of India; and eco-friendly home utilities like floor and laundry cleaners.

Karnival.com is an e-commerce platform focussed on products and experiences for a sustainable lifestyle.

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## Tupperware India takes retail count to 17; launches two exclusive brand outlets in Mumbai

Tupperware, a global premium homeware brand based out of Orlando, US, inaugurated its exclusive brand outlets in Mumbai, bringing the total count up to seventeen in a short span of three months. The brand outlets are located in Phoenix Marketcity and S.V. Road, Borivali, and are spread across 300 sq. ft. and 540 sq. ft. respectively. The newly introduced outlets focus on demonstrating a wide array of products, through innovative customer engagement zones. These outlet launches are a part of the brand's transformation from a direct-selling brand to opening multiple channels of sale, to serve latent demand. Apart from launching exclusive brand outlets, Tupperware India also entered the e-tail market in August this year and has its products listed on Amazon and Flipkart – in harmony with its existing direct selling channel.

Speaking about the outlet launches in Mumbai and Tupperware's business transformation, **Deepak Chhabra, Managing Director, Tupperware India**, said: "We recently underwent a strategic transformation and added a multi-channel approach to our selling model. Along with our well-established direct sales channel, our products are now available at our exclusive brand outlets. Consumers today have a carousel of choices and this transformation will keep up with the changing trends in consumer buying behaviour. West India being one of the better performing regions for Tupperware, we are excited to open two brand outlets in Phoenix Marketcity and S.V. Road."

With a target to reach 35 million households, Tupperware plans to open over 30 Exclusive Brand Outlets within the current year. Initial locations include Delhi, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Surat, Ahmedabad, Nashik, Kota, Raipur, Cuttack and Amritsar. On the e-com front, all products will be available on the official brand portal and will be listed on leading marketplaces like Amazon and Flipkart via Tupperware authorized sellers. Tupperware's multi-channel strategy will provide a holistic brand experience to customers with appropriate and relevant product lines made available at different touch points.



## Cargill reduces carbon footprint in India through sustainable packaging

Cargill's oils business in India has redesigned its packaging by cutting down on the amount of raw plastic used across all products. In association with Dow Chemical, the business reformulated its plastic material, making 90% of its plastic packaging recyclable. The business is committed to promoting a sustainable environment by reducing raw plastic usage in its popular edible oil brands Gemini, Sweekar, and NatureFresh. To raise further awareness among consumers, the brands carry the slogan "recycle the present, save the future" on their packaging.

The company is working to address plastic waste management in three ways: reduce, recycle and recover. Converting 90% of its plastic packaging to recyclable packaging across its oils business is just one step in this direction. The business has also reduced the use of plastic by removing the paper label and converting it to in-mold labelling and converting paper used in the corrugated boxes to Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified.

These efforts resulted in a reduction of 225 metric tonnes of plastic annually and have successfully reduced CO2 emission to 445 MT. To improve the recovery of recyclable plastics, Cargill's oils business in India is working with the Indian Pollution Control Association (IPCA), India's First PRO registered with Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to strengthen the collection and processing of used packages from consumers. IPCA helps the business in gathering post-consumer multi-layered plastic (MLP) and non-MLP waste as part of the Extended Producer Responsibility initiative. IPCA has installed various dry waste collection centers at important locations to segregate and compact plastic waste before distributing it to co-processing industries and plants. The business has increased its collection target to 70% while adding more locations across India.

Speaking about its sustainable packaging initiative, **Piyush Patnaik, Managing Director, Cargill's oils business in India**, said: "As a responsible business, we started this initiative with the goal of rethinking plastic packaging without compromising on packaging quality. Our efforts in the future will be strengthened as we are working to further our efforts to reduce, recycle and recover plastic packaging. We are constantly harmonizing our objectives with government initiatives to impact change in a sustainable manner."

Commenting on the partnership, **Ashish Jain, Director IPCA**, said "IPCA is a proud partner of Cargill's oils business in India for executing its Extended Producer Responsibility for managing plastic waste. We are happy to be associated with a company who pro-actively carries their Extended Responsibility for the betterment of society and the environment and it gives immense pleasure to see their efforts not only collecting and recycling post-consumer plastic waste, but they are also working toward reducing their plastic consumption and did excellent work in R&D with respect to plastic packaging design."



**Piyush Patnaik,**  
Managing Director,  
Cargill's oils  
business in India



**Bigbasket announces 'big 47 sale' for November**

India's largest online supermarket Bigbasket, www.bigbasket.com, kicked off its 'big 47 sale' from 6th to 17th November. Buyers can avail a minimum 47% off on 500+ top products under categories such as fruits, vegetables, organic staples, personal care, branded snacks, cosmetics, cleaning and kitchen items for a period of twelve days. Products from 50+ leading brands including P&G, Dabur & ITC are on offer. The offers are live in the 26 Indian cities where Bigbasket is operational in.

Speaking about the sale, KB Nagaraju, Chief Customer Experience Officer, Bigbasket, said: "After the tremendous response to the Freedom 47 sale in August, Bigbasket is back again with exciting discounts and offers as part of its 'big 47 sale'. Customer satisfaction and engagement have always been at the core of our operations. We are happy to announce irresistible offers such as the 47% discount allowing bigbasketees to get maximum gains and savings along with the convenience of doorstep delivery. Having seen overwhelming positive feedback from customers for the Freedom 47 sale, we have now decided to run India's largest grocery sale, branded as 'big 47 sale', once every quarter."

Bigbasket – which records about 1 lakh customer orders per day and has a registered customer base of 12 million customers – is a market leader in the online grocery segment and offers everything from fresh fruits and vegetables, meat, juices, tea,



spices, kitchen essentials, toiletries, and electronics such as LED bulbs and baby products. The company has recently expanded its offerings by adding beauty and household products, which come with the same-day delivery option at attractive prices. With the recent funding by Mirae Asset-Naver Asia Growth Fund ("Mirae-Naver"), CDC Group, and the Alibaba Group, Bigbasket has secured its place in India's unicorn club and aims to double its revenue to INR 6,300 crore by FY20.

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*“From 54 stores currently, we plan to grow to 100 stores by 2022”*



**Jagan Mohan Rao**  
Chairman and MD

**Krishnaveni**  
Director,  
Vijetha Supermarkets



Vijetha Supermarkets is among the biggest Food & Grocery retailers in Hyderabad and the State of Andhra Pradesh with 54 fruitful stores spanning 2.5 lakh square feet in retail area. With 20 years of excellence in understanding customer needs and delivering fresh and quality groceries, the retailer has earned a reputation for offering fresh and high quality products at a reasonable price to the customers.

“Our retail philosophy is to provide freshness, choice, value and service to our customers by making available at our fruitful stores everything that is essential for daily home needs and offering our customers the best deals and bargains,” says **Jagan Mohan Rao**, Chairman and Managing Director, Vijetha Supermarkets, who along with his wife and better half **Krishnaveni** laid the groundwork of the Vijetha retailing empire, which is now on path to adding newer and more spacious outlets under its banner. “Going forward, we will open new super stores and hypermarkets and aim to grow our store count to 100 by 2022, adds Rao.

**By Sanjay Kumar**

#### **Walk us through the inception and progression of Vijetha Supermarkets over the years.**

Our first flagship outlet came into existence on 7th March 1999 at Chandanagar, Hyderabad, and thus started the corporate journey of Vijetha Supermarkets Pvt. Ltd as one of the pioneer retail companies in Hyderabad and the State of Andhra Pradesh.

Modern Trade stores were beginning to come up around the time and I felt it was the need of the hour to provide better customer service with a holistic approach to food and grocery trade. In all these years of our existence, we have been careful to drive our organization forward with a proper vision, dedication and mature thought process for meeting futuristic goals and objectives.

We have grown step by step, and our progress and achievements have been marked by our dedication and customer-centric attitude. At Vijetha Supermarkets, the management's goal is to give the best quality products and services to our esteemed customers.

We believe in simplicity as our core business philosophy and it is this ethos that drives the culture and the way of working at Vijetha Supermarkets. We literally keep everything at Vijetha simple and systematic with the help and support of our employees who are all imparted proper training to this effect. But for their sincerity, hard work and integrity, our company would not have risen to this level and that's why we at Vijetha dedicate the major chunk of our success to our employees.

From one store in 1999, the company has expanded to 54 fruitful stores spanning 2.5 lakh sq.ft. of retailing area, in 20 years. The major listed categories in our store are: Groceries, FMCG, Apparels, Fruits & Vegetables, Gifts & Novelties. Today, we are acknowledged as a successful retailer with a large footprint in the market place.



### What is the major customer value proposition of your store?

Vijetha Supermarket promises to elevate shopping from being a daily chore to a world class shopping experience that also offers value for money. Our retail philosophy is to provide freshness, choice, value and service to our customers. Vijetha Supermarket tagline is 'Fresh Healthy Living', which highlights the importance we attach to selling the freshest of products, which are of superior quality. At our stores one can buy everything essential for daily home needs. We also have the best deals running every week where customers are offered the best of bargains.

### Which customer segments do your stores cater to?

Our main catchment base is the urban and semi-urban population. Our stores cater to all customer segments – attracting the high-end, low-end and mid-

end customers with a range of different product mixes.

### How would you describe the distinguishing features of your stores and how are they different from others in the category?

At Vijetha Supermarkets, we service a wide range of products across categories like groceries, FMCG, general merchandising, apparels, gift & toys and fruits and vegetables. With a strong supply chain management in place, our focus is on the placement of healthy and quality products and on giving utmost importance to customer service. The stores' operations are overseen by a highly experienced management and supported by a talented and dedicated base of over 1,000 employees who come with a rich knowledge of various product categories and with vast experience in different fields. We are proud to say that Vijetha Supermarkets is a well-structured organization with the right people in right place.



## OVERVIEW OF VIJETHA SUPERMARKETS: KEY METRICS

### Name of the retailer:

M/s. Vijetha Supermarkets Pvt. Ltd.

### Date of launch of first store:

7th March 1999

### City/ies where stores are in operation currently:

Hyderabad, Vizag, Guntur, Vijayawada

### Number of stores in operation currently:

54 stores across Telanagana & AP, as on 31st Oct. 2019

### Total retail trading area currently:

2.5 lakh sq.ft

### Product categories & merchandise mix:

Groceries, FMCG, General merchandising, Apparels, Gift & toys & F&V

### SKUs per store:

34,000

### Percentage of shelf space allotted to major product categories:

30% - Grocery; 5% - Gifts & Toys; 50% - FMCG & F&V; 15% - Others

### Monthly sales across stores:

Rs. 40,00,00,000 (Rupees forty crore)

### Per store turnover annually:

Rs. 9.5 crore

### Sales growth y-o-y:

21 %

### Average bill size:

Rs. 400/- (Rupees four hundred)

### Catchment and customer profile:

Urban & semi-urban population.

### Number of Employees:

1,000

### Sales per sq.ft:

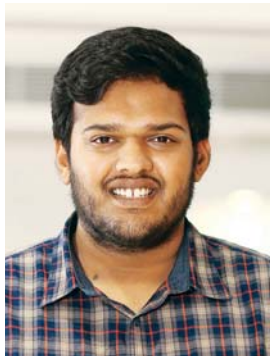
Rs. 19,200

### Sales per employee:

Rs. 48 lakh annually

**What is the location strategy for your stores?**

We opened our first store in 1999, at Chandanagar, in Hyderabad. Ever since, we have opened stores based on our understanding of consumer needs and knowing the exact locations where a supermarket will be most accessible to the public. We know that a thorough understanding of store-location and customer needs is key to a flourishing retail business and we have plenty of expertise and experience on these two fronts. All our stores are located in areas with high density and concentrated population, on main streets, which allows the stores to cater to different customer segments and service the needs and requirements of people with varied tastes.



*Taking the Vijetha legacy forward*

“  
Our association with gated communities has made Vijetha a household name in and around Hyderabad.”

— Sandeep Chowdary  
Head of Marketing,  
Vijetha Supermarkets

23-year-old Sandeep Chowdary is the son of Jagan Mohan Rao, promoter and MD, Vijetha Supermarkets. A B.Tech in Computer Science, he heads the Marketing department at the supermarket chain where he has introduced some special initiatives and focused action plans since taking over. These include the refurbishment of the F&V category and the introduction of the weekly “mandi program” at the supermarket chain. “We introduced the mandi program as a way of bringing in new varieties of fruits and vegetables from other countries and from within different regions of the country. This has given our customers more choices in that they are able to pick more varieties of vegetables and fruits according to season and tastes,” says Sandeep, whose mandi initiative has been much appreciated by customers and has also helped the company to appreciably ramp up its produce sales.

His other initiatives include ensuring that customers are able to procure “a selection of the best range and quality of

products at a better price” in keeping with Vijetha’s brand slogan of offering “fresh healthy living” products to customers. He has also been instrumental in taking various other initiatives as well –acting on the basis of MIS reports to put in place new systems and processes, tapping best talent to support the organization’s growth and monitoring the training and development of front & back end staff. “We impart good training to our boys on behavioral aspects, handling customers with politeness and showing empathy when dealing with them. We have specialized personnel as front-end managers who take care of re-filling of stocks and monitoring proper indenting of stocks to avoid redundant and non-moving stocks at stores. We have the best merchandising strategy in place by providing the best assortment and display of products, leading to more eyeballs from customers and better business,” says Sandeep.

As Marketing head, he has various responsibilities under his belt, including working

on the feedback received from customers in order to improve and burnish the supermarket’s image in the marketplace. Known for providing best quality products and extending multiple choices to customers, Vijetha wants to reach out to all customer segments in its catchment areas by providing products that meet the daily needs of consumers.

At the same time, the chain is also proud to have within its fold the best customer base that any retailer could hope for. “Our association with gated communities has made Vijetha a household name in and around Hyderabad city and has helped bring value to our business,” informs Sandeep, who is also involved in the refurbishment of older stores to modern contemporary formats and deciding on the best location for new and upcoming outlets. To his credit, since coming on board, he has been instrumental in the launch of 20 new Vijetha outlets and is working on the company’s goal to run 100 successful stores by 2022.

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**Vijetha Supermarkets Pvt. Ltd is one of the pioneer retail companies in Hyderabad and the State of Andhra Pradesh.**



**What is your strategy for merchandise display and category management to make shopping more consumer centric at your stores?**

In terms of display and merchandizing strategy, the focus is more on popular products and customers' need-based products. Seasonal products are also prominently displayed. The visibility is high for value-generation products as well as cost-effective products as they enjoy a high demand in keeping with their large customer base.

Today, each category is getting more refined and is further expanding into sub-categories. The store and the staff need to be updated from time to time. And a constant check on them is required to give the best of experience and ease to our customers. More space is allocated to product and categories that are growing at a faster rate. Reallocation of space to products and their repositioning is a constant process at the store for better business propagation.



**What are you doing to attract the young generation – the millennial and Gen Z shopper?**

To attract and appeal to the young generation of shoppers, we stock products that are especially popular with this demographic cohort. The range includes imported food products from various countries and ready-to-eat foods. We also stock a wide and varied range of products in cosmetics and deodorants category. Then, we also take special care in building on our confectionery category and improving on our product range for high priority youth focused items like energy drinks and energy bars.

**Tell us how much of your private labels/house brands account for the share of food and grocery sales?**

We have our own store brands in grocery and snacks. Our private label contributes about 15% of our overall sales in groceries and namkeens.

**What is your marketing strategy and what steps do you take to promote your stores?**

The best marketing approach for a food retailing outlet is to provide fresh and high quality products at a reasonable price and the customers become the best promoters of your store.



*Lady in the saddle*

The adage "behind every successful man there is a woman" rings loud and clear in the case of Jagan Mohan Rao and Krishnaveni. The latter, who serves as Director of Vijetha Supermarkets, has been a source of strength and a wellspring of support ever since Rao embarked on his retail enterprise journey. According to the employees at the supermarket chain, Krishnaveni is one of those people who has contributed silently to the organization's growth and success without aspiring to any credit for herself. Through their entrepreneurial grit and perseverance over the years, the husband-wife duo have successfully established Vijetha's identity and credibility as a cherished brand at the top table of F&G retailing.



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**From one store in 1999, the company has expanded to 54 stores spanning 2.5 lakh sq.ft. of retailing area, in 20 years.**



## → VIJETHA'S RETAILING INITIATIVES ON:

**Effective Technology Adoption:** The retailer has put in place robust systems like strengthened MIS reporting, data analysis, RS retail for accounting and distribution, besides introducing the new methods in inventory management for accuracy and due diligence.

**Supply Chain Management:** Its centralised distribution helps it to reduce delivery time thanks to a continuous monitoring system. To minimize the operational hurdles and improve its services, it has linked its front-end data base with the back-end process. It follows a proper liquidation policy, which allows it to control the stocks and carry out timely stock reduction whenever necessary. For better and speedy reachability of its products, the retailer has been ramping up its vehicles fleet along with proper route planning.

**Human Resources:** It gives in-house and external training to the staff, supervisors, branch managers, and in-charge personnel and offers them the resources to carry out their responsibilities with updated skills and technology assistance.

**Marketing & Promotions:** The retailer makes use of regular paper advertisements, hoardings, and release of flyers to make customers aware of its promotions, special offers and schemes. To drive sales, it organizes product samplings in collaboration with the brands.

**Customer Service:** Privilege cards are offered to its esteemed customers. Customers can place orders through phone and WhatsApp and avail of facilities such as home delivery and online shopping.

**Key Strengths in Retailing:** Strategic alignment with all vendors, Rich experience of over 20 years in retail industry, Optimization of resources with strategic inventory management and alignment of SKUs, Steady growth year on year, Presence in most happening areas of Hyderabad & AP, Established best practices with the help of technology, Efficient Inventory management

## What are you doing to strengthen the online footprint of your brand?

We already have a good online presence through Vijethagrocer.com via which we offer all types of food products, fruits & vegetables, grocery products, households, and personal care products at an affordable price and with the facility of free home delivery across Hyderabad areas on a minimum order basis. Our online platform allows you to purchase with the option of cash on delivery or make the payment using credit/debit online banking also. So, if you are at Hyderabad and don't want to go out for shopping at a supermarket, just login to vijethagrocer.com and place your order and get the benefits of purchasing at the best rates from us. Not only do we bring for you the healthiest and freshest fruits and vegetables, grocery and staples as well as the best organic food items at a most competitive price but also the assurance of same-day delivery.

## How would you describe your best achievements so far?

From a single store we have developed and grown to 54 fruitful stores, which is no mean achievement in itself. We have been able to expand and grow our business to the current level only due to our proper focus on customer service and on providing and making available healthy and fresh of stock of products to our customers on a daily basis.

## What are your plans and targets for the future?

We are planning to open more number of outlets with bigger size. Going forward, we will open new super stores and hypermarkets. **PG**



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***Distribution Redefined***

# Next-Generation Considerations

Retailers need to focus on data visibility, tech-savvy labor and new store configurations to accommodate their future grocery shoppers.

By Jenny McTaggart



**T**he art of grocery shopping is in the midst of an evolution, and retailers that recognize that they must update their supply chains accordingly will help ensure a brighter future.

While there are a number of challenges to consider, supply chain experts cite three specific areas that retailers can home in on now to make way for tomorrow: data visibility, as it relates to both retailers and consumers; the need for a new kind of labor force; and revamped store layouts that offer more inspiration while also allowing for more space to fulfill online orders.

“The challenge for retailers today is to recognize that the people who are in their 20s now grocery shopping are more different than ever before, and

we need to adapt to that,” says Mike Griswold, research VP for the consumer value chain team at Gartner Inc., a global research and advisory firm based in Stamford, Conn. “If you rewind the clock 30 years ago, there was no online, and kids would go into the store with their parents. That’s how they learned to shop. Fast-forward to today, and the demographic group that’s growing up now, in many instances, has never been in a supermarket.”

Moving forward, some shoppers will prefer to order groceries online, while others will continue to seek out a store experience – so grocers are in a place where they must consider how to provide both options, Griswold notes. Supply chains must be nimble and accurate, which is quite different from how people have traditionally thought of the grocery business.



### Visibility and the Importance of Accurate Data

To ensure a more accurate supply chain that can get the right product to the right place at the right time, data visibility will be paramount for the industry. Track-and-trace technology such as blockchain continues to gain attention for all of its potential to provide better visibility, but first, retailers and suppliers must prioritize having clean, accurate data, according to Angela Fernandez, VP of community engagement for GS1 US, based in Ewing, N.J.

Fernandez observes that the industry still needs to strive for higher rates of on-shelf availability and product availability online. Meanwhile, the data being used for digital listings seen by consumers is too often inaccurate. She points to an analysis that GS1 US conducted a year and a half ago with the Trading Partner Alliance (TPA), an industry affairs group formed by the Food Marketing Institute and the Grocery Manufacturers Association, which found a less-than-desirable 55 percent accuracy of product data available digitally.

Thankfully, industry leaders are making strides to solve this problem, in reaction to the data inaccuracies found online. A new initiative being launched by GS1 in collaboration with the Consumer Goods Forum is Verified by GS1, a global registry designed to ensure that product data is accurate, complete and trustworthy. "Every GS1 office will work with brands and retailers to upload all their product data into a global registry for

validation," explains Fernandez. "This is a massive undertaking, considering there are GS1 offices in 114 countries. We have eight of the largest GS1 offices, including GS1 US, launching [the registry] this year, and then we'll look at additional rollouts across all the other countries GS1 supports. We're doing this because a good consumer experience relies on trustworthy data. Validating a minimum set of data associated with a product is a key step in supporting the industry's digital evolution."

On the business side of data visibility, particularly as it relates to traceability, GS1 US has been working on providing implementation guidance for critical tracking events and key data elements, continues Fernandez. "The romaine lettuce outbreaks we saw last year really put an increased focus on this," she notes. "The other thing moving this along is the industry's interest in blockchain, which many organizations, including Walmart, are leading the charge to more fully explore the traceability use case. Standards provide interoperability between brand and retailer systems, help ensure data quality, and are foundational to blockchain applications."

GS1 US is also providing a new online interactive tool to help suppliers and wholesaler/distributors understand what supply chain data they need to capture, and in what format it should be captured, in the event of a foodborne illness outbreak, she says.

Gartner's Griswold notes that while master data management certainly "isn't sexy," companies that skip the process of collecting the right data and properly analyzing it won't be able to go further with blockchain or other exciting technologies that provide so much promise for the retail supply chain.



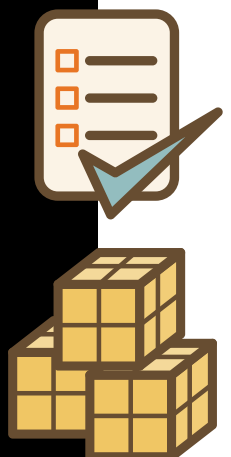
“Validating a minimum set of data associated with a product is a key step in supporting the industry's digital evolution.”

— Angela Fernandez  
GS1 US

## Delving Into Data

While the big chain stores often get more press about their supply chain innovation, several regional grocery retailers have been taking a closer look at supply chain data to solve common challenges in the industry:

- ▶ Lakeland, Fla.-based Publix Super Markets has taken a lead on seafood sustainability by participating in the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership's (SFP) Ocean Disclosure Project, which promotes supply chain transparency. The retailer works with SFP to collect and analyze data that helps it give customers "the very best sustainably sourced seafood," according to Guy Pizzuti, category manager of seafood at Publix. The data also helps the company identify fisheries with room for improvement.
- ▶ Pittsburgh-based Giant Eagle participated in a Trading Partner Alliance pilot with Coca-Cola and Land O'Lakes to better understand and reduce dwell times. Advisors at McKinsey and Co. and Four Kites were also involved in the project. The companies evaluated data from select warehouses on a weekly basis for six months, and met to come up with new ideas and solutions. They considered factors such as physical attributes in the yard, technology for drivers and warehouse staff, manpower use and shift alignment, and scheduled loads. One of the major takeaways from the pilot was that they could create 2 percent to 4 percent additional capacity by improving the dwell time within their control.





### Labor Force of the Future

Meanwhile, as technologies with artificial intelligence and machine learning continue to gain acceptance in retailers' supply chains, companies will need new talent to

help analyze data and understand its impact at retail, advises Griswold. "You need people to understand how machine learning and artificial intelligence work, how to interpret results, and how to build models, or at least the data that goes into these models," he says. "The type of talent that retailers need moving forward, particularly around the supply chain, is changing. And the challenge is that everyone is looking for the same talent."

He recommends investing in a data scientist now, even if you're not exactly sure how this skill will fit into the organization. Griswold also points to retailers such as Kroger, Walmart and Dollar General, which have been spending more time on college campuses to promote retail supply chain and career opportunities. "Kroger and Walmart have invested in labs and people, and they're doing a lot of their own research and development, trying to understand through the vastness of the customer data that they have what customers want and how to deliver against that," he notes.

"The challenge is to create a working environment, particularly on the technology and supply chain side, that looks and feels more like a tech company, and less like a traditional food retailer," he suggests.

“  
**The challenge is to create a working environment, particularly on the technology and supply chain side, that looks and feels more like a tech company, and less like a traditional food retailer.**

— Mike Griswold  
 Gartner Inc.



### Rethinking Store Layouts

At the end of the retail supply chain is the physical store or warehouse, where products are being

stored and ultimately taken out to be presented to customers. Even that area is changing, thanks largely to the growth of omnichannel retailing.

Store layouts need to change to reflect two important needs, in Griswold's view. First, even standard-size stores that reach up to 70,000 square feet likely need to have a new back-room configuration to allow for mini warehouses that can be used to fulfill online orders. "It is much more efficient to pick orders out of a back room," he says. "You don't have customers there, and you can set it up much more efficiently in terms of the picking cycle."

Secondly, even though more people are buying groceries online, there are still shoppers who want to visit the store to smell, taste and feel product, so retailers need to make sure they're providing a sensory, interactive experience, according to Griswold. "In grocery, the store needs to be about experience – and those experiences should be in fresh food," he observes. "If people just want a shopping transaction, they can get it online from Amazon."

For consumers who prefer to shop online, grocers should strive to provide a good buy-online, collect-in-store experience, achieving one- and two-hour delivery or pickup windows, and being able to ship product where customers want to pick it up, he advises. "The ability of the supply chain to do those things that maybe we thought were fads are now becoming things that you have to do," Griswold asserts. "That's what's going to separate companies over the next two to three years." **PG**

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# *A natural elixir for a healthy lifestyle*

With its nutritive and medicinal values now being increasingly highlighted by nutritionists, the importance of using honey as a food item has been growing and leading to its regular consumption in myriad forms by people who aspire to a healthier lifestyle.

**By Sanjay Kumar**



**H**ealthy eating is the big buzz word today and the health food category is growing at an exponential speed. For consumers, healthy eating is more than a habit – it’s a lifestyle – and honey makes it easy for consumers to make healthy eating an integral part of their lifestyle. The importance of using honey as a food item by all sections of consumers is now being highlighted by nutritionists. As many nutritionists vouch, regular consumption of honey strengthens the white blood corpuscles to fight bacteria and viral diseases and improves immunity. Honey’s function as an instant energiser is a dominant health and wellness pitch as it contains sugars that are quickly absorbed by the digestive system and converted into energy.

Honey is also a rich source of carbohydrates, natural minerals, vitamins and enzymes. It is a perfect natural taste enhancer for food. The right

combination of fructose and glucose in honey actually helps the body regulate blood sugar levels in a diabetic patient. Honey has been used for centuries to treat a wide range of ailments owing to the presence of antioxidants in it. With its in-built anti-bacterial, antiviral, anti-fungal, anti-cancer properties, it is akin to a medicinal product. Also, as it is hygroscopic, it speeds up healing, cures wounds, and boosts tissue repair. Honey’s anti-bacterial properties are owing to its acidic nature and enzymically-produced hydrogen peroxide.

In view of the nutritive and medicinal values of honey, health and fitness conscious people today who aspire to a healthier lifestyle have taken to regular honey consumption in myriad forms. “There is a tremendous pull demand from health-conscious consumers for healthier products like honey, which take them away from regular processed sugar,” says Prakash Kejriwal, Owner and Chairman, Kejriwal



**Bee Care India (P) Ltd**, one of the first organized exporters of honey from India and a company largely credited with developing the market for Indian honey in the international market.

His words find a strong validation when one looks at how honey production in India has ramped up over the years. “In 1996, when we began our operations in the Indian market, the total production of honey in the country was merely 8,000 MT and there was no demand for honey either in India or abroad. With our entry, the market for Indian honey got developed and Indian honey was recognized as a quality product in the international market, leading to more demand as well as better prices for bee keepers. We took the lead in adopting international quality standards, and were instrumental in helping boost the production of Indian honey, which stood at 100,000 metric tonnes in 2018,” adds Kejriwal.

Another noticeable category trend is the increase in the number of first time customers trying out honey products, which shows people’s growing belief in the quality and benefits of honey. “Consumers in the metros and Tier 1 cities are shifting faster to healthier categories, especially for products like atta bread, multi-grain foods, millets foods, and honey. What makes this shift all the more noticeable is the number of new brands entering these categories and thriving on the back of changes in the consumption patterns. A similar cycle is now playing out in Tier II cities as well. A heightened consciousness for healthier lifestyles, a growing obsession with weight management, and health awareness drives by government agencies and private organizations are all important factors that are prompting people to ratchet up their consumption of healthy products like honey,” says **Pankaj Mishra, CEO, Apis India Limited**, one of the largest manufacturers and exporters of honey in India and amongst the top brands in the honey category.

Additionally, the category is also witnessing growth thanks to the variety in the product range of honey. In today’s time, consumers want choices, and even young mothers who are purchasing honey for their kids are looking for flavour choices and variants. This pattern of behaviour is in keeping with the trend for progressive demand in terms of more product options across categories, especially healthier natural options. “With the increasing drift towards a healthy life, honey has attracted newer companies to enter the market and put their best foot forward with their innovative product offerings. This trend is really a positive sign for the industry as there is an increase in competition, which acts as a growth driver for the industry, besides offering consumers more innovative and a wider range of products within the category,” opines **Arshdeep Singh, CEO & MD, Allied Natural Product**, which exports honey to 15 countries today and sells the same export quality honey in the Indian market as well. “Allied Natural honey breaks the stereotype that all good quality honey gets exported to other countries. We offer the Indian consumer export standard, highest quality honey at a competitive price that doesn’t hurt the pocket but improves the health of its consumers,” adds Singh.

As a result of these shifts and trends, we see the emergence of newer and healthier product lines and products, either by fusion or by direct import from the international food market. For instance, there has been a strong influx of international products like health drinks, cold press juices, baked and gluten-free snacks to food fusion examples like masala oats, honey oats, honey loops and malt-based oat meal bars, all of which depict the change and shift toward healthier products.

As the obvious alternative and choice substitute to sugar, honey’s benefits have been known to us since ages. A recent consumer

**Regular consumption of honey strengthens the white blood corpuscles to fight bacteria and viral diseases and improves immunity.**

**Being a 100% natural product, derived out of nectar from flowers and made by honey bees, honey has zero fat and zero cholesterol, and is ideally suited for the modern-day hectic lifestyle.**

preference survey shows consumer purchase pattern across categories driven by factors like purity, health and taste as top priority. Honey, being a natural and healthier supplement to sugar, has been witnessing a steady surge in demand. Being a 100% natural product, derived out of nectar from flowers and made by honey bees, honey has zero fat and zero cholesterol, and is ideally suited for the modern-day hectic lifestyle.

No wonder that manufacturers and marketers in India are pushing consumers to make it an integral part of daily diet. It also explains why honey is getting good attention nowadays – visit any good grocery shop and you will find the retailer stocking 4-5 brands of honey. The recent spurt in the number of brands in the honey category is a testimony to the health benefits that the product offers.

The diverse flora of the country makes it possible for various kinds of natural honey to be found in India. Honey is available in different flavors depending upon the flowers used by the bees to produce it. As a result, there is a diverse range of honey products currently available in India, which finds applications in food and beverage, cosmetic and pharmaceutical industries. Some of the major varieties of natural honey are mustard honey, eucalyptus honey, mountain honey, acacia honey, wild forest honey, sunflower honey, lychee honey and sidr honey, to name a few.

Honey's popularity as a health product and its ubiquity in the kitchens today is also made possible by the value addition of honey to base products such as breads or confectionery as a 'topping' to imbibe its benefits. For instance, take the case of Breakfast, which is the most important meal of the day. Whether it's a quick slice of toast spread thickly with honey, homemade muesli or even a stack of pancakes, honey has become a crucial part of our everyday breakfast spread.



**FUTURE THRUST AREAS**

Beekeeping is considered an essential component of crop husbandry practices and thus an integral part of agriculture. Beekeeping in India can be promoted by:

- ▶ Motivating people to adopt high-tech apiculture
- ▶ Giving adequate training to the officers and beekeepers
- ▶ Creating awareness through visual and other media on the benefits and uses of honey in daily life
- ▶ Organising district level awareness programmes on the use of honey bees and other pollinators for yield enhancement
- ▶ Providing training on value addition of honey and other hive products to women self help groups for income generation
- ▶ Supply of disease-free Indian bee colonies and bee appliances with the help of selected bee breeders of the state
- ▶ Provide sugar at subsidised rate to the beekeepers for lean season management of bee colonies
- ▶ Select areas with high potential for beekeeping as Honey Villages
- ▶ Select beekeepers from each honey village and supply five colonies each for sustainable beekeeping
- ▶ Ensure support to the beekeepers during natural challenges (climate change, incidence of disease and pests, other calamities, etc)
- ▶ Establishing e-marketing facilities in different regions so as to get support price for honey



ANALYSIS

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**The category is witnessing growth thanks to the variety in the product range of honey. Consumers want choices, and are looking for flavour choices and variants.**

Keeping in view the shift in customer preferences, honey brands are introducing various variants to their honey offerings. Major honey brands are actively positioning honey as a versatile food product that can be consumed in multiple ways. From being an externally-applied skin moisturiser to being consumed in beverages as a weight-loss ally, the product's benefits are many and are being used by honey brands as marketing planks. On a macro level, the Central Government has already standardised the technology for the preparation of diversified honey-based products, including beverages, cakes, jams, breads, vines, vinegar, dry fruits, soaps etc.

**Market size and growth drivers**

The honey market in India was worth INR 15,579 million in 2018, registering a CAGR of 10.9% during 2012-2018. The market is further projected to reach a value of INR 28,057 million by 2024, at a CAGR of 10.2% during 2019-2024. This makes India one of the leading honey markets in the world, which has created an intense competition in terms of innovation and cost. Additionally, the demand for honey in India is augmenting on account of the growing consumer preference for natural and healthy alternatives to artificial sweeteners, rising awareness regarding the benefits of honey and the increasing popularity of various honey flavors. In addition, owing to its proven anti-bacterial, anti-microbial and anti-inflammatory properties, honey is projected to gain a momentum in both the food and non-food applications across the country.

As per the latest data from the National Bee Board, under the Department of Agriculture, the country's total honey production reported in 2017-2018 was 1.05 lakh metric tonnes compared with



35,000 metric tonnes in 2005-2006. With sustained efforts and dedicated programmes like Honey Mission in the last few years, honey production in India has seen a 200 per cent increase in the past 12 years. Today, India also has as many as 35 lakh bee colonies compared to 8 lakh during 2005-2006. The number of beekeepers, beekeeping companies and honey societies has also increased and as of January 2019, the country had 9,091 registered people in the apiary business.

With international demand for honey growing, India exports 50 per cent of the commodity. In the past 12 years, exports have increased by 207 per cent. Alongside the production of honey, exports have also increased in recent years to countries such as Germany, US, UK, Japan, France, Spain and Italy, which are the main markets for Indian honey exports. To further spur production, the government plans to set up an Integrated Beekeeping Development Centre (IBDC) in every state and so far 16 such IBDCs at Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Manipur, West Bengal, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka have been set up. Punjab, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are among leading honey producing states in India.

Indian honey industry is a key forex earner for the country and provides employment to many a landless farmer (beekeepers). As per reports, India exported 61,333.88 MT of natural honey to the world worth of Rs. 732.16 crore/ 105.48 USD million in 2018-19. The major export destinations (2018-19) include the US, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Qatar. With the industry growing at around 15% currently, revenues generated by the honey market is set to climb for F&B companies.

The US is the largest importer of honey in the global market and also a top destination for Indian honey. China is a dominant exporter because of its cheaper prices and highest output in the world. Even though higher import duty imposed by the US on Chinese honey is a breather for Indian exporters, cheaper product does find its way to the top market, say those in the honey export business. Nonetheless, exporters are optimistic



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**Some of the major varieties of natural honey are mustard honey, eucalyptus honey, mountain honey, acacia honey, wild forest honey, sunflower honey, lychee honey and sidr honey, to name a few.**

that the ongoing US-China trade war will boost exports from India and keep up the double-digit growth in volumes. The export growth manifests the acceptance of Indian honey in the global market, including the US and Europe, say exporters.

#### **Diversification and marketing**

Honey bee farming or apiculture has been one of the oldest farming activities in India. The practice of beekeeping is a boon to our large agrarian economy. Honey bees in their search for nectar help with the pollination process and in increasing the per hectare field productivity by up to 25%. The industry of apiculture or beekeeping offers many opportunities for extension and diversification.

There exists immense scope for production and marketing of bee products such as pollen, propolis, royal jelly, bee wax and bee venom. Besides, sale of bee packages and rearing and sale of pedigree queen bees also offers tremendous scope. Honey bees can also be managed as and when required for pollination of field and horticultural crops and for hybrid seed production in vegetables and other bee pollinated crops. Thus, renting out bee colonies for pollination can also be another source of revenue for beekeepers.

Boosting colony productivity by adopting apicultural diversification will help in making beekeeping internationally competitive and also pave the way for the country to enter global markets with other bee products too, thus enhancing the economic status of beekeepers. Apart from generating direct employment for the beekeepers,



such ventures would create a need for good artisans, hive manufacturers, apicultural equipment and machinery manufacturers, transport systems for irrigation of colonies, traders, product quality experts, packers, sellers, raw material dealers, etc. and allied industries.

#### **Road ahead**

Even as honey is seeing increased use in our kitchens and on tables, there is also a concomitant increase in the medical use of honey. This trend will continue to expand business opportunities for manufacturers, and there will be many opportunities for unifying pharmaceutical production with honey production in the future. Drugs containing honey are equipped with key trace elements that have wound-healing properties. Hydrogen peroxide, methylglyoxal and other compounds that are present in honey can be used in the production of antibiotic drugs, compelling researchers to devise more accurate studies on the medical uses of honey.

The effectiveness of honey-derived drugs will raise its role and importance in the health care industry across the world. Already, the health benefits associated with honey are gaining acceptance among consumers world-wide. Markets across the world are showing higher receptivity to the use of honey for medicinal purposes. Higher clinical and medical studies in North America, European, and Asia-Pacific countries are expected to boost the regional honey markets.

Though the domestic market has been growing over the past few years, the per capita honey consumption in India is still low at not more than 50 grams per year, whereas globally it ranges from 250 to 300 grams with Germany topping in per capita honey consumption at a whopping 2 kg per year. In Asia, Japan is the biggest consumer of honey, with per capita consumption of up to 700 grams per year. The domestic honey market – branded and unbranded – is estimated to be about Rs. 2,000 crore, branded honey contributes about Rs. 700-800 crore. Honey, which falls under the fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) segment, is the fourth-largest sector in the Indian economy in terms of production, consumption and exports. But while the honey market is evolving in India in

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**Honey's popularity as a health product and its ubiquity in the kitchens today is also made possible by the value addition of honey to base products such as breads or confectionery as a 'topping' to imbibe its benefits.**



tandem with the international trends, the per capita consumption of honey, as mentioned earlier, is still low by international standards.

But with health consciousness on the rise, we are witnessing a definite spurt in domestic demand on the back of an increase in per capita income, which is driving per capita consumption of honey as well. Looking ahead, the market for honey will continue to evolve in India and grow in strong double digits. The demand and growth opportunities for the honey category are fantastic, more than ever before since there is a visible shift towards health and wellness. India, for decades now, has been a price-conscious market but pockets of the health and quality conscious consumers are now growing rapidly.

A survey suggests that 30% of consumers in India are willing to spend more on products that they perceive are "better"— a much higher percentage than is found in more developed markets such as the US, Germany and the UK. People in India have

started to feel the need to consume natural and high quality foods, avoid toxic and synthetic foods and replace synthetic sweeteners. Honey is the most sought after magical syrup, which tops the charts of natural health trends today.

The growth of the retail health industry is helping raise the popularity of wellness products like honey. Merely 5-7 years ago, honey was treated as more of a medicinal product but today it is part of daily grocery to many. More and more people are now consuming honey for its enormous therapeutic benefits right from weight loss, to being an instant energy booster to empowering the immune system and the list is endless. Humans are eating the product, using it for baths, fixing their wounds with it...the use of honey in the millennial generation is rising and natural products are becoming an important part of our daily lives once again. Honey as a sustenance and healing food is nothing new; but in recent years, everyone has started to talk about it. Producers and brands have seized on this initiative and are developing several innovative honey-based products. These products are completely different from what has so far been available in the market by being extremely unique.

Also, propelling the growth of the honey market, are the training programs provided by Government of India. These training programs, in the nature of advisory and mentoring services to educate farmers on the latest beekeeping practices, are helping to stimulate the production of honey. For instance, the Government has launched the "Development of Beekeeping for Improving Crop Yield", a scheme that helps in organizing training and awareness programs for beekeepers and in supporting the establishment of honey processing plants. On account of these factors, the market is projected to reach a value of INR 28,057 million by 2024, registering a CAGR more than 10% during 2019-2024.

The Government has been supporting the production of honey in India by granting help in developing business through commercialization, R&D activities, innovation and exporting. These initiatives support the producers by advisory and mentoring services, organizing workshops and seminars, general and industry-specific training and providing subsidized products, such as business planning tools. Scientific validation of the medicinal utilization of honey and its growing value as a premium ingredient in nutraceuticals are also acting as strong market drivers. **PG**



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



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## Honey specialist with a value-added product range

➔ **Company and brand profile:** Apis India is one of the largest manufacturers and exporters of honey in India. It is amongst the top three brands in the honey category – a feat achieved within just three years of launch in the consumer space. The brand is one of the top B2B processors and suppliers of honey in India – a category expected to clock growth of 10-12% CAGR.

**Product range and portfolio:** The company has introduced value-added honey with natural Ayurveda infusions like tulsi, lemon, ginger, sitopladi, and its “bee fit” range. Its range of honey includes multiflora, lychee, eucalyptus, cider,

sunflower, rapeseed, orange blossom, wild flower, black forest, acacia, organic and raw unprocessed honey.

The brand has recently forayed into allied kitchen ingredients categories, which include jams, dates, pickles, macaroni, green tea, and preserves.

**Brand USP and competitive advantages of products:**

With over three decades of experience in sourcing, processing and exporting various types of honey, the company’s manufacturing facilities maintain the highest standards of quality. It holds ISO 22000 certification, apart from other widely recognized certifications – ORGANIC, TUV, USFDA, KOSHER, EIC, APEDA, FMCG, etc. Apis products pass through a three-level safety check – at farms, at inwarding stage, and finally before dispatch. Thanks to the quality control parameters, Apis consumers get exceptionally high-quality and safe products on their tables.

The company also believes in responsible sourcing, and trace all its products from the farms till they reach the consumer, thus ensuring delivery of its promise of purity. According to one consumer survey, Apis is one of the most preferred brands across Flipkart and Amazon for honey.

**Key markets and consumer segments:**

Domestically, the brand is well established in southern, western & northern markets, especially in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh. It plans to deepen its penetration to other geographies as well. The brand is also present across leading e-commerce

sites – Amazon, Flipkart, Bigbasket, Grofers. In Modern format stores, it is present in D-Mart, HyperCity, More, and Big Bazaar.

**Marketing, sales and retail strategy:**

Currently, the brand has a presence in over two lakh retail outlets and with its expanding footprint across Modern Trade and e-commerce, it believes that it’s the right opportunity to foray into allied food categories to garner above average growth.

For strengthening its retail reach, the brand is targeting all modern trade platforms, including e-commerce where it is already one of the preferred brands out there. It is striving for top of mind brand recall by consumers across channels and emerge as a leading national food brand. For conventional distribution, the brand is expanding into new territories in a phased manner by focusing on regional flavors for its product offerings.

On the branding front, it is doing 360 degree integrated campaigns covering key markets. Its marketing budgets are in line with the growth plans with the aim of being at the top amongst “best brands” in the food category.

**Plans for new markets and customer demographics:**

Apis has been expanding its geographic presence ever since launching the brand domestically in 2016. Today, the brand is present pan-India barring a few States. The focus is to improve the penetration in northern & western India. The company believes that the learnings from markets is a continuous affair, and it will keep adding new varieties to the categories it is into.

**Future plans and roadmap ahead:**

Apis is engaged in creating ground-breaking, impressive products at an optimal cost through continuous value engineering that sets the yardstick of worth and quality to consumer. It wants to bring innovative healthy food products at the best prices to the consumers. Every year, it is adding new categories to the product platter. The aim is to maximize the kitchen share of the consumer for Apis products of which many new innovative and traditional healthy categories are in the pipeline.

“



**Apis India has earned the badge of being Honey Experts in a market that has very few branded national players in honey. With our expertise in backward integrated supply chain, our play in the domestic market has worked very well for us.**

– Pankaj Mishra  
CEO, Apis India Limited



## A pioneer in developing the honey market in India

→ **Company and brand profile:** The Kejriwal Group, which runs and operates Kejriwal Honey under Kejriwal Bee Care India Pvt. Ltd. have been involved with the food industry since 1967. The company forayed into the honey business in 1996 when the total production of honey in India was merely 8,000 MT. Way back then, there was no demand for honey either in India or abroad. The Kejriwal Group was among the first organized exporters of honey from India and is credited with developing the market for Indian honey in the international market. With the entry of the Kejriwal Group, the market for Indian honey was developed and Indian honey came to be recognized as a quality product in the international market leading to more demand as well as better prices for the country's bee keepers.

**Product range and portfolio:** The company launched products in India for the quality aware consumers under its premium brands – Nature's Nectar, Nature's Nectar Select, Honey Chew, and Vanantara. These products are targeted at consumers who want the best quality honey on their tables.

**Brand USP and differentiator:** Equipped with an ultra modern facility to handle 18,000 tonnes, the company maintains complete traceability of its honey produce – from farm to fork – earning the trust of customers. All operations are fully automatic and with no manual interface, thus ensuring the best quality and hygiene as per the international standards.

All Kejriwal Honey products are distinct and unique in their own ways:

- ▶ Honey Chew is a 100% healthy substitute for sugar-made candies. It is a ready to eat non-messy honey chew bar, made with the best quality honey.
- ▶ Nature's Nectar brand is premium export quality honey, ethically procured and brought to the table only after quality checks.
- ▶ Nature's Nectar Select range brings you the range of best unifloral honey that India has to offer.

“



**Some of the biggest and most famous honey companies in the World procure honey from the Kejriwal Group to be repackaged under their brands. We are also one of the largest suppliers of B2B honey in India to quality consumers across all segments like bakery, pharmaceutical, cosmetics, ice cream, beverages in food, etc.**

– Prakash Kejriwal  
Owner and Chairman,  
Kejriwal Bee Care India (P) Ltd.

- ▶ Latest brand Vanantara is 100% pure, certified, traceable and naturally organic. Vanantara's sourcing is from regions where farming is still done traditionally. The product redefines the way organic produce is marketed by procuring from remote areas – highlands, tribal areas and deep tropical forests that are bereft of any chemical influence.

**Industry boosting initiatives:** The company is first true sources certified and boasts of several other quality certifications like FSSAI 2000, ISO 2001, Halal, Kosher, Non GMO and USDA/EU Organic. As one of the largest exporters of honey from India, it has won several accolades from the Government and other trade bodies for outstanding achievements in the honey trade and industry.

The company has taken various initiatives as expected of a pioneer. Once such contribution is the Kejriwal Foundation for Rural Development, which is one of the oldest active Non-Government Organizations (NGO) involved in the uplift of the poor and landless farmers.

The company's efforts are directed towards encouraging bee keeping in rural areas of the country so as to provide respectable livelihood to the poor by creating a stream of income for them. It also conducts regular seminars and training camps across India for beekeepers to educate them about the new techniques and to understand and resolve their problems at the ground level.

**Key markets and customer segments:** The company counts the quality conscious markets in the US and EU as its catchment. These markets buy bulk honey for their various repackaging and Industrial purposes.

**Retail and market strategy:** Kejriwal Honey products are available across all retail formats as well as on e-commerce platforms.

The company conducts regular market sampling drives in stores for consumers to try its products. In addition, the brand is expanding its footprint to more cities and locations for increasing its brand awareness and the availability of its products throughout the country.



## Offering export quality honey at pocket-friendly price

➔ **Company and brand profile:** Allied Natural Product commenced operations in 2014 with exports of natural honey from India. Although a recent entrant in the market, its arrival is backed by a workforce with years of experience in the industry, a strong supply chain and stringent quality control manufacturing process. The company started operations by exporting honey to the USA. In due course, it has expanded operations to other countries as well and exports honey to more than 15 countries today.

The company sources the honey on a pan-India level through a strong network of bee-keepers, which it has helped set up. The company also has its own factory set up in Sonapat, Haryana, where it has expert professionals well versed with beekeeping, swarm removal and other important facets of honey production. The honey processed at Allied Natural goes through stringent quality and processing standards to ensure that the customers get the best pure raw honey out in the market.

**Product range and portfolio:** Allied Natural Product sources only 100% bee produced honey. The company has a range of honey to offer, from polyflora to certain monofloral honey – litchi, eucalyptus, acacia, black forest, among others, which are highly appreciated for their earthy aroma and raw and smooth taste.

The company will also shortly start offering organic polyfloral honey collected from the forests of India, which is highly appreciated for its earthy aroma and raw and smooth taste.

**Brand USP and product's competitive advantage:** The honey from Allied Natural breaks the stereotype that “all good quality honey gets exported to other countries.” Allied Natural honey offers the Indian consumer and export standard, highest quality honey at a competitive price that doesn't hurt the pocket but improves the health of its consumers.

**Market and retail strategy:** Allied Natural is in the market with a newer approach to its product and target customers. The company believes that

the two major product differentiators are quality and price and that there are two types of customer segments – those with high purchasing power and ones with low purchasing power. The first type, with high purchasing power wants to buy the best product irrespective of the price. However, even those with a lower purchasing power also want to buy the best product within their limited

resources available. The similarity is that they both want the best quality and as a honey brand we bring to the market a product offering that satisfies both customer segments with their respective requirements. In other words, instead of focusing on particular customer segments, we focus more on the product quality. The company's organic honey, however, will come a higher price point, which will allow consumers to differentiate this product in terms of its limited availability and affordability.

To take its products to newer markets and demographics, Allied Natural is concentrating on maintaining its product quality parameter consistently; introducing SKUs in convenient size and pack at the best possible MRP and backed up by attractive consumer schemes; offering lucrative trade margin for all channel partners; keeping an elastic yet growth oriented TOT (terms of trade) for all level channel partners; and capturing dealer boards and outdoor spaces at happening places prior to the introduction of its products in that market.

**Future plans and road ahead:** The company's primary plan agenda for propelling the brand into a higher orbit comprises the following thrust areas:

- Offering QPS (quantity purchase schemes) to boost the profitability of such retailers who are going to invest in its stock.
- Offering a timely product expiry schedule as well as a mechanism for damage claims to retailers.
- Placing the product in attractive CTUs at the retail level to gain more brand exposure.
- Regular service to retailers through a dedicated sales team and a well-knit distribution network.
- Providing good consumer offers with best possible quality to create a pull at the retail level.
- Creating POP items keeping in mind the regional festivities of all communities and maintain to keep a continuous association with all communities of the society.

“



**Allied Natural Product sources only 100% bee produced honey. We have a range of honey to offer – from polyflora to monofloral honey as well as organic honey – which are highly appreciated for their earthy aroma and raw and smooth taste.**

– Arshdeep Singh  
CEO & MD, Allied Natural Product





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SINCE 1957

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Matlab



Shudh Khao  
Swasth Raho...

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## Pure Gold honey from Mahableshwar and the Sahyadris

→ **Company and brand profile:** Pure Gold honey brand is operated by Pure Berry's, an 18-year-old company that began operations in the food processing and manufacturing industry with products such as fruit toppings, jams, preserves, cordials and crushes. The company entered the honey business under the Pure Gold label, which is known for its pure and natural honey collected from its bee-keeping farms in the forest of Mahableshwar and the adjoining Sahyadri hills.

Pure Gold honey began its honey production with 10 bee-keeping boxes. Today, the capacity has reached 2500 boxes as the brand forges ahead on its corporate mission of supplying the best-of-nature products to customers.

The company owns state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities and is a pioneer in introducing new line of quality product offerings. As an ISO 9001:2008 certified company, it prides on its high regard for safety, nutrition and taste, which is reflected in the quality standards of its products.

**Product range and portfolio:** The Pure Gold brand has a product footprint that covers a wide range, which includes the purest golden honey and other products. In the honey category, Pure Gold has 5 honey varieties, which are collected from different kinds of local flowers. The range includes Jamun honey, Karvi honey, Gella honey, Kesri honey from Kashmir, and Multiflower honey.

Other than honey, the Pure Gold brand has entered categories such as dairy under which it makes and sells a host of products made with pure cow milk from Mahableshwar. Pure Gold dairy products include cheese, ghee and yogurts.

About six months ago, Pure Gold launched a Nature's store to sell a wide range of organic and chemical-free products such as jaggery, haldi, different types of unpolished rice, grains, and pulses.

**Brand USP and product differentiators:** Pure Gold products come with the quality assurance of being 100% natural. With a high regard for safety, nutrition and taste, the company believes in producing, storing and selling high quality hygienic range of food products that meet the palate demands of customers worldwide. The company's quality control and research and development techniques ensure production and delivery of the finest quality products to meet every customer need.

“



**Pure Gold is able to procure and provide for the purest and most naturally found varieties of honey and dairy products thanks to its access to large tracts of pristine forest lands in and around Mahabaleshwar, which serve as the sourcing grounds for its range of natural products.**

— Husain Mala  
CEO & Founder, Pure Berry's

The company is able to procure and provide for the purest and most naturally found varieties of honey and dairy products thanks to its access to the large tracts of pristine forest lands in and around Mahabaleshwar, which serve as the sourcing grounds for Pure Gold's range of natural products. For instance, the company has large tracts of forest land populated with jamun trees, which allows it to collect Jamun honey in a large quantity. Pure Gold's Karvi honey is a rare variety, available only once every 7 years. This is because the karvi flower blossoms only once in 7 years in Mahabaleshwar. During the karvi blooming season, Pure Berry's forests are dotted with beautiful blue karvi flowers and the company goes all out to collect karvi honey during the season and store it for customers. Another local flower in the Mahabaleshwar region is Gella, and the honey collected from this flower has great medicinal value. Another honey product from the Pure Gold brand is Kesri honey, which is available in a limited stock, and comes from kesar flowers in Kashmir. Pure Gold's Multiflower honey is the most common honey available round the year, which is collected in all seasons throughout the year.

**Key markets and consumer segments:** The focus of Pure Gold is more on the institutional market than the retail market. In retail, its products are targeted at the quality-conscious premium customer segment.

**Marketing, sales and retail strategy:** The company's marketing and retail strategy is based on its overall brand philosophy – of making the best products possible for people who appreciate it. Guided by its brand values and ethos, Pure Gold plans to expand its product range with the best local products available in and around Mahabaleshwar and will focus on its strength of being 100% natural. Pure Gold products, thanks to their premium quality and positioning, hold a special appeal in the tourist market – not only in and around Mahabaleshwar but also elsewhere in India. The products are available pan-India and can be easily bought through the company's online portal [www.pureberrys.in](http://www.pureberrys.in)



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## Beelicious offers premium quality honey with traceability

**→ Company and brand profile:** LivRite is a social enterprise that offers hi-quality products that encourage guilt free indulgence. Its first range of products is premium, pure, responsibly sourced, traceable, authentic honey (7 variants of natural and spice infused honey) under brand “Beelicious.” The brand procures India’s finest uni-floral honey directly from its bee-keeper group thereby establishing its geographic origin and process within its captive facility. It offers the product to its consumers through multiple distribution channels.

LivRite was founded with the mission to:

- fill the void of unavailability of a certain standard of honey that was pure, good to taste, offered variety and sourced responsibly; keeping the growth and benefit of the entire ecosystem in mind.
- restore the importance and value of; and educate people about one of humanity’s most primitively discovered wonder foods; that has nothing but benefits to offer on consumption (if pure);
- to change its perception from being a medicinal food to one that should be part of daily grocery.

**Product range and portfolio:** LivRite, under its Beelicious brand, offers raw Kashmir acacia honey, classic eucalyptus honey, and Kashmiri honey infused with cinnamon, cardamom, clove and ginger.

**Brand USP and product’s competitive advantage:** The brand’s biggest advantage is that it does everything in-house, end to end. This gives it complete control over

quality, right from the farm stage; and enables it to provide honey in its best and most authentic, natural form. It helps the brand to avoid adulteration at multiple levels: beekeepers / farms, aggregator to processor; and to deliver the promise of “honey as it is naturally” to customers at all times.

Apart from this, access to the best honey in the country and the traceability is an advantage. Most products are not traceable to its source. The brand offers uni-floral honey, which are region specific and it has also put a system in place whereby the consumer can learn more about the source of origin of each of the honey in his / her jar.

The brand’s methods of processing and packing are also a differentiator. It has an imported plant, which works on a technology different from the standard plants; wherein the enzymes, antioxidants, vitamins and all nutrients in the honey stay intact and are not destroyed due to excessive heat or other such factors. This ensures that the person consuming the honey is able to reap the benefits of its consumption.

**Market and retail strategy:** As of now, the company is focused on developing the urban markets through offline channels. The metros remain its key markets for offline business and the geographic focus is on west and south India. Online, of course, the reach is much larger and extends up to Tier II and III cities and towns as well.

The brand caters mainly to the urban working segment population who have limited time and access to quality food.

“



**We want LivRite to be associated with health-conscious and socially aware and empathetic consumers. We are creating organisational values that will establish and sustain the trust factor of the Beelicious brand, in times to come.**

— Kayan Motashaw  
Founder, LivRite Foods LLP

Primarily, Beelicious as a brand wants to engage with the woman of the house, who is willing to pay for quality and is also socially empathetic.

Besides India, the Middle East is a huge market for Beelicious products. The brand is currently actively working to strengthen its export vertical. On the B2B front, HoReCa and the gifting segment are two verticals, which have shown great acceptability and appreciation for Beelicious honey.

**Future plans and road ahead:** The Beelicious brand is seeking to create its own niche in India’s INR 1.5 billion recipe-based honey and blended honey market, which is currently dominated by a few prominent brands and many smaller, regional or local brands. It is also working towards exports in the premium category of 100% pure honey under its Beelicious label to the GCC markets. Besides, the company is planning to gradually launch a wider range of uni-floral Indian honey directly procured at source, and come out with some very interesting honey-centric, high-energy food products in the Indian market, at an appropriate time.





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## *Indian Culinary Forum honours best culinary artists of India at 16th Annual Chef Awards*

**T**he Indian Culinary Forum recently organised the 16th Annual Chef Awards at Hotel Le Meridien, Delhi. The event is held to commemorate the International Chefs Day, which falls on 20th October every year. **Amitabh Kant**, CEO NITI Aayog, was the chief guest of the evening at the ICF ceremony this year. Also present on the occasion was **Padma Shri Sanjeev Kapoor**, apart from around 400 industry professionals, including young chefs and students.

The Indian Culinary Forum is an association of professional chefs of India. It was formed in New Delhi in 1987 as an exclusive non-profit organization, dedicated solely to the advancement of the culinary art of India. The Forum's objective is to act as a link, a platform and an instrument for the enhancement and overall development of the national community of chefs. As part of its culinary focus and agenda, the ICF organizes various competitions, seminars, and events with the aim of enhancing the culinary prestige to India internationally; to promote Indian cuisine globally; encourage Indian nationals to consider a career in the hospitality industry; and help young chefs to hone culinary skills through training, workshops, and competitions.

Addressing the attendees at the Annual Chef Awards, Amitabh Kant, said: "Indian chefs are one of the best in the world. Indian chefs are the best brand ambassadors of the country and will play a pivotal role in achieving Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dream of becoming a 5 trillion economy by 2024."

As a build-up to the awards, culinary competitions across four days were held at the RIG Institute of Hospitality & Management, Greater Noida and Academy of Pastry Arts, Gurugram in

which young and promising chefs from ten different categories participated. Over a 100 of culinary artistes showcased their creativity and skills during these competitions. Noted Malaysian chef Peter Chan was the chairperson of the jury in this year's competitions along with renowned national and international chefs, with chef Sireesh Saxena acting as the organizing secretary. The Chef Awards also honoured industry veterans in six other coveted categories. The winners were selected by a panel of an esteemed jury.

Speaking on the occasion, **Anil Bhandari**, a hospitality industry veteran and Chairman of the Organising Committee ICF, said: "Our idea behind the inception of the Chef Awards was to provide both veteran and upcoming chefs a professional platform where they can exhibit and hone their culinary skills. We want Indian culinary art to gain more international recognition and acclaim. We are thrilled to see how the valuable experience gained by all the chefs here have helped them maximise their potential and growth in the last many years. We hope the Chef Awards continue to inspire and encourage more chefs."

**Chef Davinder Kumar**, President Indian Culinary Forum, added, "The Chef Awards aims to not only honour the contributions of our fraternity members but also motivate thousands of youngsters to take up this profession. Hosting the Chef Awards wouldn't have been an immensely successful affair without the constant support and encouragement of the industry experts, jury members, associates, sponsors, and participants. We have all made earnest endeavours to bring our fraternity closer year after year and will continue to do everything possible for the betterment of the culinary profession." **PG**



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# Life of the Party

Grocers can engage consumers with gourmet items for special occasions.

By Lynn Petrak



Every day is a holiday on some level. The big ones come in a regular rotation — soon it'll be the Fourth of July, followed by Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas and other winter holidays — but consumers mark special occasions on any given day, from birthdays to promotions to farewell parties, to name just a few.

Putting the “special” in special occasions generally means elevating the foods and beverages served at such gatherings. Retailers can attract shoppers looking for those items by providing and promoting gourmet offerings, including both packaged products and store-made or private label choices.

Opportunities are significant in this space. According to the recent “State of the Specialty Food Industry” report, from the New York-based Specialty Food Association (SFA), 36 percent of consumers say that they purchase specialty foods for a special occasion like a dinner party, birthday or holiday.

The profile of these gourmet shoppers underscores the potential of this part of a grocer's business.

“Those numbers are true of both male and female consumers,” notes Denise Purcell, head of content for the SFA. “Baby Boomers and Gen Xers are the most likely consumers, age-wise, to buy these products for special occasions. Millennials and Gen Zs aren't too far behind, but it seems to be a habit that increases with age and likely income to entertain.”

Many parts of the store can be a draw for occasion-minded, gourmet-seeking shoppers, meaning that basket lift can occur in several spots. In the perimeter, for instance, the in-store bakery, deli,

prepared food area and produce section offer a variety of products for parties or gatherings of different scales and sizes. Meanwhile, in center store, specialty foods can be merchandised for everyday consumption or for days that mean something more to a shopper.

## Baked-In Success

The in-store bakery is one intuitive destination for consumers looking for foods for special events. “One of the primary reasons people visit the bakery is because they are celebrating something like a birthday or graduation,” affirms Eric Richard, education coordinator for the Madison, Wis.-based International Dairy Deli Bakery Association (IDDBA). “It certainly fulfills that need, but bakery is also in a great position to reach out to individuals who may not be buying for big celebrations, but just to celebrate with themselves or even on an individual basis.”

## Key Takeaways

- ▶ Retailers can attract shoppers looking for celebratory items by providing and promoting gourmet offerings across the store.
- ▶ New specialty food launches remain strong, with several companies having recently introduced items appropriate for special occasions.
- ▶ Another way to boost sales tied to special occasions is to merchandise gourmet items as gifts, including ready-made and custom gift baskets.



To leverage that interest and to position the grocer as a provider of solutions for special occasions, bakeries and other departments can up their gourmet game to set themselves apart and to stay on par with specialty retailers like independent bakeries, liquor stores, confection shops or restaurants with catering businesses.

“Grocers are seeing what’s happening in the market and being creative,” notes Richard. “In bakery, you find more than just bagels and doughnuts and birthday cakes — there are some pretty creative celebratory offerings. That’s what you do to stay competitive.”

According to Richard, one way to think outside the cake box, so to speak, is to offer smaller portions for smaller-scale celebrations. “If you look at the changing demographics of our country, you see that shoppers aren’t primarily shopping for a large family, and there are more single and two-person households today,” he observes. “An in-store bakery can take advantage of people shopping for themselves, or with or for another person, with products tailored specifically for them, such as a smaller-sized pie or cake or individual slices. It’s ‘Let’s celebrate you!’”

This mindset extends to prepared foods, hot food bars and service deli counters, which can provide customized or smaller-scale portions of such gourmet offerings as fancy sides and salads. Meat departments, which are already in high promotional gear for summer grilling, can tout their solutions to shoppers seeking foods for their gathering or celebration that doesn’t fall on the Fourth of July or Labor Day.

Carrying specialty foods and beverages is another signal to shoppers that a store provides items for both “regular” eating occasions and occasions that mean something more. Examples include specialty cheeses, deli meats, crackers, dips, desserts, and adult beverages, including champagne, spirits, wine and beer.

**What’s in Store?**

New specialty food launches remain strong, according to the SFA’s research, and several companies have recently introduced items that fit with special occasions. For example, Gracious Gourmet, of Bridgewater, Conn., recently rolled out All Seasons Fruit Spread, Farmhouse Tomato Jam and Roasted Red Pepper Artichoke Tapenade.

Another example is a new line of fruit-based hummus, in Strawberry, Mango, Blueberry and Cherry flavors, from Lantana Foods, based in Austin, Texas. In the adult beverage category, the newly unveiled Smirnoff Zero Sugar Infusions line appeals to hosts and guests looking for flavor and less sugar, in Cucumber & Lime, Watermelon & Mint, and Strawberry & Rose varieties.

Meanwhile, as certain better-for-you or weight-management eating plans have taken off, some shoppers are looking for gourmet items for special occasions that may fit into those diets, based on



their guest list. Research from Chicago-based market researcher Mintel shows that there has been an increase in specialty vegan products, for example.

Richard agrees that stores should be aware that special occasions usually involve indulgent items, but the umbrella is big enough for healthier options. “You can buy more products for healthy consumers, like ancient grains or natural products, but the vast majority of people are looking for a treat,” he points out.

**The Spirit of Giving**

Another avenue for enhanced sales tied to special occasions is to merchandise gourmet items as gifts. The “State of the Specialty Food Industry” research shows that 16 percent of those surveyed buy gourmet items as gifts, and that such gift-giving is popular among demographics coveted by grocers. “Gen Zs rank high for this, second only to Gen Xers,” remarks Purcell. “Gen Z likes to talk about and enjoy food with family and friends, so it seems they like to share interesting products for gift giving.”

To that end, while many stores offer gift baskets for major gift-giving holidays, a grocer can offer gourmet food baskets that can be made on demand for other occasions like birthdays, or as a housewarming gift.

When stocking and merchandising for special occasions, grocers can complement foods and beverages with items that go well with those types of events, like decorative napkins, flowers or even a small rack of greeting cards.

“It makes sense to have some nonfood products in the department,” advises Richard. “If nothing else, you are offering a convenience to shoppers. If someone is able to get other essential items for their occasion at the same time without having to go a quarter-mile down the road to another store, you will boost sales and make a good experience for those consumers.”

In addition to traditional merchandising techniques, including displays, cross-merchandising, and the use of social and traditional media, there are ways for grocers to let shoppers know that they are destinations for gourmet items for special occasions. One example: A store could bring in a chef/caterer or a professional party planner for a special event. **PG**

“**If someone is able to get other essential items for their occasion at the same time without having to go a quarter-mile down the road to another store, you will boost sales and make a good experience for those consumers.**

— Eric Richard  
IIDBA



# Breakfast beverages well-placed with time-pressed Indian consumers

Ready-to-drink breakfast beverages are likely to appeal to consumers who are on the move and may be pressed for time to prepare breakfast.



**O**ats have become a popular breakfast in India with savoury oats in particular seeing significant growth. These products are meant to be consumed hot—in line with the Indian preference for hot, savoury breakfasts—and require cooking. This can make them seem time-consuming for people in a hurry. In light of this, ready-to-drink breakfast beverages are likely to appeal to consumers who are on the move and may be pressed for time to prepare breakfast. Highlighting the time-saving aspect of these drinks is as important as their nutritional benefits.

The Indian retail milk market is projected to be one of the the fastest growing globally, according to Mintel research. Dairy plays a very important role in the Indian diet and milk is strongly associated with health in the minds of consumers. In 2017, PepsiCo marked its entry into the dairy space in India with the launch of its range of grain-dairy beverages under the Quaker brand, aimed at the breakfast market. The range Quaker Oats + Milk is available in two flavours and is said to have been created in collaboration with former cricketer Sachin Tendulkar, who features prominently on the packaging. The Quaker Oats + Milk range claims to provide 10% of the recommended daily fibre requirement and 15% of the daily calcium requirement.

## PepsiCo's Quaker Oats + Milk range

This range of drinks is positioned as grain-dairy beverages with the goodness of milk and fibre. These vegetarian products are said to be a source of calcium, contain real milk and fibre that helps digestion.

This launch from PepsiCo was likely linked to the growing criticism and sugar concerns that the carbonated soft drinks (CSD) market has been experiencing. That said, PepsiCo is not the only company to have turned to dairy to reduce its dependence on the CSD category. In 2016, Coca-Cola India launched a range of flavoured dairy drinks under the brand Vio.



Drink Source: Mintel GNPD



### Startups launch breakfast drinks with oats and dairy

According to Mintel Global New Products Database (GNPD), 6% of flavoured milk and meal replacement beverages in 2017 were positioned as breakfast drinks through the inclusion of oats or oats-derivatives as ingredients. In early 2017, Indian health startup Zago Life introduced a range of breakfast shakes containing oats and oats fibre, while Goodness! Beverages, an on-demand ready-to-drink (RTD) beverage startup, launched a range of breakfast smoothies. Both Bangalore-based brands have experienced some success among health conscious consumers, largely through the strength of word-of-mouth publicity.

Zago's Almond Flavoured Breakfast Shake with Oats is free from gluten and preservatives and is made with oats from Australia. It contains protein and vitamins and claims to enliven your life and days. The drink is said to provide the nutrients that the body needs to kick-start the day or anytime it needs a reboot. This vegetarian dairy-based beverage contains added nature-identical flavourings.

Oh My Goodness! Vanilla Flavoured Oats Smoothie is said to be an anytime homogenised heat-treated milk breakfast beverage that is perfect for on-the-go lifestyle. This dairy-based drink contains oats, is rich in fibre, and provides protein. The vegetarian product does not contain artificial flavours, colours, gluten, or preservatives. These products are positioned as convenient and nutritious breakfast options, and focus particularly on the use of oats in their formulation. Oats as a breakfast option has done phenomenally well in India, outpacing cold cereals in terms of growth. According to Mintel



research, hot cereals saw significant growth between 2012 and 2016—they have outpaced cold cereals and now account for nearly 60% of the breakfast cereals market. The launch of savoury flavours saw the category really take off.

The popularity of savoury oats in India is undeniable, but these products are not ready to eat and require cooking. This is where the oats-based dairy drinks have a clear advantage, despite not being a standard breakfast fare in the country. They are ready to drink, targeted specifically at on-the-move consumers with hectic schedules and little time for a sit-down meal. This aligns with Mintel 2017 Global Food and Drink Trend 'Time is of the Essence', which highlights how time investments needed to prepare or consume products are becoming as influential as nutrition or ingredient claims.

**According to Mintel Global New Products Database (GNPD), 6% of flavoured milk and meal replacement beverages in 2017 were positioned as breakfast drinks through the inclusion of oats or oats-derivatives as ingredients.**

### Scope to cater to health-conscious women

Breakfast drinks are especially likely to appeal to consumers who have dairy drinks for breakfast because they are convenient. Mintel research found that 41% Indian adults had consumed packaged RTD dairy drinks in the three months to June 2016. Of these adults, 28% had consumed packaged RTD dairy drinks for breakfast. Interestingly, women were slightly more likely than men to choose dairy drinks for breakfast, with the most significant difference being observed in the younger age group.

This may be linked to the fact that younger women were more likely than men to say that they eat healthy so that they don't have to exercise (33% vs 25%), according to Mintel research. This indicates that there is scope for breakfast beverage products to increase their targeting of young health-conscious women by positioning breakfast drinks as nutritious and convenient options for them. Indian women have been gaining significant respect as athletes over the last few years and are increasingly being showcased in sports advertisements, such as 2016's viral Nike advertisement that featured 10 Indian female athletes. **PG**



Drink Source: Mintel GNPD

# Gourmet tea in India – the journey so far and the road ahead



The rise in the disposable income of Indians and their penchant for experimenting with their food and drinks has led to a growth in the popularity of gourmet and exotic teas in India.

By **Ambarish Ghosh**

**T**ea is the most preferred hot beverage in India. In the year 2017, India consumed a total of 678,200 tonnes of packaged tea. To hundreds of millions of tea drinkers in the country, this beverage is a staple in their daily lives. However, despite the billions of cups consumed every day, for a long time, a majority of Indians didn't experiment with their tea. They have traditionally consumed either black, green, lemon, or milk tea. However, with the rise in disposable income and familiarity with global trends, the adoption of gourmet and experiential tea culture has risen across the country. Several tea cafes have set up shop in the country, offering a wide range of unique and exotic combinations and tisanes to please the taste buds of tea lovers.

These cafes have given tea aficionados an option to relish the beverage in elegant spaces beyond the erstwhile options like roadside stalls or within their homes. Many of these outlets are capitalizing on the desire for such places. They offer premium seating space, a variety of food, and have evolved as

stylish upmarket meeting places for youngsters and professionals alike. Even though, the early day tea-cafes tried emulating this model, the fact that tea was still perceived as a common household drink denied it a premium positioning. This resulted in a sobering of the markets and tea players soon came to terms with the conventional brand positioning. Contrary to the appeal established by many coffee shops, tea outlets adopted a more casual style, encouraging patrons to make multiple visits in a single day similar to how it has traditionally been with the tea stalls. They expanded their offerings by adding various green, herbal, fruit and flower-based teas and snacks. Premium tea blends became a novelty offering at such places or a more common choice to be served in homes, rather than enjoyed outside.

Keeping in sync with the trend, various premium tea brands have also introduced several exotic and high-quality brews in India. Among the unorthodox and innovative tea blends, the maximum demand has been for teas that are natural and offer innumerable health benefits. The young generation of tea drinkers is open to paying a premium price for an exotic blend such as the fruity and floral teas comprising flavors like strawberry, cranberry apple, orange, rose or jasmine, etc. This has given teas the much-needed momentum and the concept of 'gourmet tea' has picked up steam among Indian tea lovers in the last few years.

Consequently, tea chains have been opening new outlets at a rapid pace. Investors are also taking notice and have started pouring their millions into the proverbial tea cups. These tea chains have been innovating constantly and are coming up with unique ideas. They have ushered in a culture where socializing over tea is becoming chic and less commonplace. Tea is finally turning a corner and adapting to a new, unique positioning.

The gourmet tea culture has taken time to catch up with the Indian consumers due to the perception that tea is a staple drink and a part of daily routine. However, the rise in disposable incomes and a penchant for experimenting with their food and drinks has led to a growth in popularity of 'gourmet and exotic teas' in India. The market is growing at a healthy rate and now with the investors showing interest in the tea cafes, the future of 'gourmet tea' in India seems quite bright! **PG**

The writer is Founder and Director, The Hillcart Tales, a premium tea brand offering exotic and assorted teas along with regular teas.





# Evolution and shifts in coffee consumption patterns

One big trend is the shift in preference of Indian consumers from Robusta to Arabica coffee beans, which leave a relishing aftertaste with their sweeter, softer taste.

By **Bharat Sethi**

**Coffee drinkers are not only experimenting with newer brands and the type of roasts but also with brewing methodology, brewing equipment and delivery techniques.**

**T**he second wave of coffee was pretty much non-existent in India and Indian consumers are fast tracking to the third wave of coffee that focuses on experience, convenience and origin. The young social media savvy coffee drinkers are a lot more open to newer flavors, brewing methods and innovative blends. For most millennials, drinking coffee has become a lifestyle choice rather than just another beverage on the menu. They fancy drinking a cup of coffee in social gatherings with friends and also enjoy their coffee alone on-the-go. Due to their ubiquitous and active way of life, young consumers also value the experience more than the price of their coffee.

One big trend is the shift in preference of Indian consumers from Robusta to Arabica coffee beans. While Robusta blends have been dominant till a few years back, blends with Arabica and even more,



pure Arabica, are now fast gaining acceptance as premium and gourmet products all over India. Robusta beans contain more caffeine as compared to Arabica and is inferior to the former variety. Arabica coffee beans have a sweeter, softer taste and there are tons of berries that are quite prominent which leave a relishing aftertaste; Robusta coffee beans on the other hand have a stronger, harsher taste, which is not enjoyed in all parts of India and are appealing mostly to drinkers of coffee with chicory.

Coffee consumption patterns will constantly evolve in next few years with the introduction of innovative cafes, products and styles of serving coffee. Coffee drinkers are not only experimenting with newer brands and the type of roasts but also with brewing methodology, brewing equipment and delivery techniques.

The cafe culture is here to stay and will continue to see a meteoric rise on the back of growth in Tier 2 cities. Just as Indian chai has become wildly popular in cafes in the West under various names like "chai latte" etc., western style cafes are now



popping up all over India. Especially, southern & central cities like Bangalore, Mumbai and Pune have embraced this new trend and boast of dozens of cafes where friends socialise over coffee. This culture has been one of the main reasons for millennials shifting to coffee or in many cases having their first cups of coffee in such cafes. In more exotic cafes, baristas serve up espresso, cappuccino and many more styles of drinks to people who had far fewer options before. These cafes focus on the origin of beans and have started to import beans from South and Central America as well as Africa as coffee lovers crave for more styles and blends.

Brands that focus on building communities around their innovation, and can get customers to know their story, will be the ones to succeed in the long term. Companies should realise that coffee drives an emotional connection with consumers and for the consumption to become a ritual and not just habit, brands will have to know their customers really well & closely. Today, consumers understand what 'aromatic coffee' truly means and the difference a small batch of freshly grounded coffee can do to the overall taste and caffeine kick. The trend of 'low calorie, less sugary, high quality coffee' will continue to rise.

Coffee, being an inherently healthy and natural beverage, has a lot of potential to replace soft drinks and sugary juices. Lots of consumers are ditching carbonated energy drinks and replacing it with coffee, which is more affordable and readily



available as an energy boost. Recent studies have found that many consumers want coffee with functional benefits such as metabolism, focus, relaxation, or high in antioxidants. India is also one of the fastest growing market for fortified or functional coffee products.

Single serve coffee has the maximum potential going forward in India – a country dominated by tea drinkers. Ready-to-drink coffee is seeing a huge surge in demand as consumers can easily grab their coffee. RTD coffee has the potential to be the standout category and the choice of maximum young consumers in all of premium soft beverages consumption in the next five years. There is seasonality in the RTD category currently and more variants in the RTD cold brew, filter coffee, hot brew foodservice categories are needed to give consumers more choices.

A trend for the future could be Nitro coffee, which has emerged in the West. It makes the coffee frothier and feels fresh. It's a specialty drink where coffee is infused with nitrogen gas. The result is a rich and creamy texture, which makes the coffee gourmet quality immediately. I see this trend catching up in cafes and bars in the next five years. Also, an added benefit of Nitro coffee is that it tends to be stronger. **PG**

**Today, consumers understand what 'aromatic coffee' truly means and the difference a small batch of freshly grounded coffee can do to the overall taste and caffeine kick. The trend of 'low calorie, less sugary, high quality coffee' will continue to rise.**



The writer is Founder, Rage Coffee, a one-of-its-kind instant coffee fortified with nutrients and made with the finest Arabica beans, sourced straight from Harar, Ethiopia.



## *Wheat beer – the new favorite of Indian beer enthusiasts*

Consumers appreciate the taste of a full-flavored wheat beer – it is low in alcoholic content but great on taste and goes well with a lot of tapas (snacks) options.

**By Fernando Bustamante**

**D**id you know that beer is the third most popular drink in the world after water and tea? It is also one of the oldest alcoholic beverages in the world, dating back to the fifth millennium BC as well as the world's most widely consumed alcoholic beverage. I am sure you must be in awe of the drink you consume in almost every moment of celebrations with your friends or family.

Working in the leading brewing company of Spain for more than 25 years now, I must say that the making of beer is as much an art as it is a science. Brewers across the world share the same passion and love for the beverage. So much so, that today there are around 400 types of beer available across the world. An interesting point to note is that beer, although it forms a part of the alco-bev industry, has an average of 5% ABV (alcohol by volume). This is also one of the reasons to be a favorite drink of many people. Oktoberfest, which is the world's largest beer festival, is celebrated not only in Munich, Germany, but across borders with various offers and new variations of beer.

This drink has evolved over the years. From golden lagers to pale ales and dark stouts, everyone has their own particular choice of beer. Ever since I have come to India, consumer preferences often amaze me. Although the Indian market is very different from the country I belong to, i.e. Spain, beer consumption patterns here have changed, and it is slowly becoming the default social drink consumed on occasions where people want to spend quality time together. This is very similar to Spaniards' way of life. They like to enjoy their food along with their beer – cañas and tapas (small glasses of beer with snacks or finger foods) are slowly becoming the new favorite of the health-conscious young consumers. Cañas and tapas also reflects the sole principle of moderate drinking – enjoying beer in small glasses in optimum amount, not to get high but to spend quality time with your near and dear ones.

For food enthusiasts who love to pamper their taste buds with different types of cuisine, India and Spain have a colorful cuisine and emulate a common love for food and drinks. While Indians have a huge variety of snacks from pakoras to tandoori chicken to seafood, Spaniards have a similar concept of 'tapas' which are snacks and finger food that could be anything ranging from cocktail onions to olives, croquettes and cheeses. And just as Indians like their snacks with drinks, the idea of 'cañas' (small glasses for beer) and 'tapas' (small bites of food) are popular in Spain. 'Cañas & tapas' (snacks and beer) of Spain, though at a nascent stage here, will soon become a regular resort of Indian party lovers, making these party enthusiasts excited.

While you may think of wine as the companion to food, the depth and versatility of beer cannot be underestimated. From bright golden lagers to cloudy wheat beers, there is one to make the perfect match for each cuisine.



The emerging trend of microbreweries in India is also worth noticing, which is due to consumers who are keen to experiment and open to trying superior quality experiences. The good news, therefore, is consumers are spoilt with choices with numerous global as well as homegrown beer brands.

The recent trend that the industry has seen is the growing popularity of wheat beer. Known to have a cloudy appearance in contrary to its clear golden counterpart lager, the Belgian wheat beer is unfiltered and has yeast sediments suspended in the bottle when packaged. These suspended yeast sediments impart a characteristic taste to the beer along with the tanginess of fruity flavors coming from the orange peel used as one of the ingredients.

We recently launched Mahou Maestra Wheat, which is the perfect fusion of Spain and India Ethos. It is made with a unique combination of Sevillian (Spanish) orange peel and the citrus flavor of Himalayan organic coriander. Wheat beer is refreshing, delectable and easy to drink. Consumers appreciate the taste of a full-flavored wheat beer – it is low in alcoholic content but great on taste and goes well with a lot of tapas (snacks) options. From tandoori snacks to Spanish olives and cheeses, both Indian and Spanish tapas go well with wheat beer.

The future of Indian beer industry is quite promising. Consumers desire a variety in everything they want to try – be it food, clothing or beer. From a brew on-tap flavored with mango or coffee to a non-alcoholic beer, there are umpteen options for consumers to try and they are only going to grow in times to come.

I would like to end with another fact on beer. Cenosillicaphobia is the fear of an empty beer glass. Hope one never has it! Salud! **PG**



The writer is CEO, Mahou India, the first fully owned subsidiary of Spanish brewing major in India, Mahou group.

**From tandoori snacks to Spanish olives and cheeses, both Indian and Spanish tapas go well with wheat beer.**



# How brick & mortar stores can tackle the market challenges from big e-commerce players

Small business owners have a constant fear about competing against e-commerce giants.

However, the situation is slowly changing and physical stores are adapting to the evolving trends with the help of a few techniques designed to take on the challenges caused by big e-commerce players in the market.

By **Yashraj Bhatia**

**D**o you remember going to a neighbourhood shop with your parents and grandparents? A few decades ago, this experience was an exciting and fun task. People visited multiple stores to search, bargain and purchase a single product. It was tiring and yet satisfying activity. It allowed people to familiarise themselves with the neighbourhood and grow as a community. The visit to the garment and confectionary stores made the festivals memorable. The bright streets and loud music uplifted the spirits of the consumers and the business owners.

In recent years, the technological developments and industry progression have paved the way for newer techniques to connect with the audience. Online shopping and e-commerce has changed the outlook of shopping on a global level. They have become a one-stop-shop or portal, catering to a wide range of consumer needs.

There is always a discussion regarding the status of brick & mortar stores after the advent of e-commerce. The online shopping platform is said to have a negative impact on physical stores. The attractive deals, product variety, secure delivery and replacement options allure consumers to choose the portals in favour of the stores.

All this has created a constant fear among small business owners about competing against the e-commerce giants. However, the situation is slowly changing and physical stores are adapting to cope up with the evolving trends. Here are a few techniques utilized by brick & mortar stores to tackle the challenges caused by big e-commerce players in the market.

**Create an online platform:** The term online shopping can be daunting and intimidating to small business owners. The process and technology do seem expensive and complicated. However, creating a digital shop is the primary step in handling the current issue. Various web developers and agencies offer efficient and straightforward portal development solutions to meet their needs. The stores should take this inevitable step to embrace the changes in the industry.

**Develop a niche product:** It is natural to consider the product variety and profile of the e-commerce portal as a threat. The brick and mortar stores cannot afford to sell this wide range of products. However, they can convert this disadvantage into a positive trait. They can develop a niche product to attract consumers. It is relatively easy to find multiple products. But novelty items are a rarity, and it increases the demand for the product.

**Formulate consumer-centric strategy:** The current market strategy is focussed towards satisfying the expectations of the consumers. Customers have too many options. It has become mandatory for companies to formulate unique techniques to capture the attention of their consumers. Physical stores should take the effort to adopt a consumer-centric strategy by analysing their needs and creating effective solutions.

**Include value add services:** One of the primary advantages of the e-commerce portal is free delivery and replacement options. The physical stores should absorb and replicate certain aspects that can change consumer perception. This can be offering free delivery and service options, replacement guarantee and freebies. This builds the credibility of the brand among the consumers.

**Encourage consumers to visit the store:** It is valid that most people do not have the liberty of the store to visit a store due to time constraints. However, the stores can open additional hours to accommodate the time availability of the customers. They can run promotional campaigns to encourage customers to visit the store. It is essential to find the ideal balance between offline and online marketing tools to achieve unified results.

**Offer competitive prices:** Another significant advantage of the big e-commerce portals is the price advantage. They have the budget to offer exorbitant deals and discounts. These websites also provide cashback options that motivate customers to revisit the site. The brick & mortar stores should offer competitive prices to their clientele. This would encourage them to visit the store or avail the product from the brand website.

**Choose the right promotional plan:** The promotional plan plays a crucial role in the success of a small business or a corporate giant. The physical stores should create the right promotional plan to sustain and grow in the industry. Though this might



not require huge budgets, identification of the right medium and creation of ideal content can be highly beneficial in the longer run.

**Run a loyalty program:** A loyalty program is an excellent way of retaining the existing consumer base. This has proved highly effective for all companies across the globe. Small businesses can research various programs and finalise the best platform for their needs. It is essential to develop an incentive-based method to entice customers.

**Invest in digital marketing:** Digital marketing has been an inevitable aspect of marketing and promotions. They help the companies to connect with the target group through social media and search engine optimisation. The business owners can hire a digital marketing specialist or agency to help them to promote their products and services.

**Register in the online directories:** Online directories provide space and opportunity for companies to position their products and services. This is beneficial to brands that require a digital space to promote their solutions. Some reliable websites and portals display the services of the neighbourhood businesses. Brands can register their details in these sites to begin their digital journey.

The brick and mortar stores form an inevitable part of the heritage and local economy. They are not only business entities but impart a sense of brotherhood in the community. In recent days, people do not have the time to socialise due to their commitments. This forces them to choose the most accessible available entity for the shopping needs. Though e-commerce portals are required for the development of the industry, it is not fair to avoid the brick & mortar stores. It is essential to identify the ideal balance between both sectors to ensure a healthy and economic society. The physical stores are no longer reluctant of change, and this is the first step towards the evolution of the business world. **PG**



**Physical stores should take the effort to adopt a consumer-centric strategy by analysing their needs and creating effective solutions.**



The writer is Founder, Bajar, a retail discovery app for retailers and consumers. Available on Google Play Store and Apple App Store, Bajar lets you discover retailers near you, what they sell and if they have any ongoing offers. Becoming a Bajar Partner enables retailers to set-up their own "Virtual Store" on the app, which they can add/edit at any time.

# what's next

## ► The Mumum Co launches Protein Puffs in three flavours

Healthy kiddie snack brand The Mumum Co has launched a new range – Punchy Protein Puffs. Keeping in line with the brand's promise of no junk, the punchy protein puffs are devoid of any added sugar, preservatives, gluten, MSG or artificial colouring. Created from roasted Indian supergrains – corn, jowar and amaranth – these baked goodies are a powerhouse of calcium, iron and protein. An easy and healthy way to indulge, these healthy protein puffs are a wholesome, baked snack preserving the goodness of ingredients without adding any chemicals or altering the taste of the grain.

Enjoyed by both children and adults alike, these savoury puffs are available in three popular flavours – Cheesy Cheese for the cheese lovers, Masala Madness for spice lovers and Pizza Party, because who doesn't love Pizza! These healthy and delicious snacks are available in pouches priced at Rs. 20 for 20 gm and Rs. 60 for 60 gm. The brand also offers family packs, three packs of 180 gm for snacking on the go. The combo pack offers all 3 lip-smacking flavors for those who can't choose just one!

Shop for The Mumum Co's all-new Protein Puffs on their web site: [www.mumumco.com](http://www.mumumco.com) as well as on Amazon.in, Nature's Basket and Foodhall, amongst many other stores.



## ▼ Marico introduces coconut spreads made from natural ingredients

Marico's cold pressed virgin coconut oil brand Coco Soul, which forayed into the organic variants space with the launch of cold pressed virgin coconut oils last year, has recently extended the product portfolio with a range of coconut spreads under their vegan gourmet food range. The brand has introduced two flavours in the range – Original and Cacao.

The spreads are made with 100% natural ingredients and are preservative free, making it a healthy choice for the health conscious. Made from handpicked, high grade coconuts, the spreads contain no added preservatives or stabilizers to bind the ingredients, and are concocted using only the core ingredients – coconut milk and coconut syrup. The brand has used the superfood coconut to create an exciting format in the form of Coconut Spreads, which can be best enjoyed with breads, paranthas and as a co-ingredient in desserts.

The Coco Soul Coconut Spreads are a new entrant in the spreads category and already been voted the prestigious Product of the Year 2019 certification

under the category of Table Spreads. The variants are priced at Rs. 349 for a 265 gm jar. One can purchase Coco Soul Coconut Spreads at leading retail stores such as Godrej Nature's Basket and TESCO across Mumbai, Pune, Delhi NCR, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Chennai. It is also available online on Amazon and Flipkart.



## ▼ Nivea launches hand creams with deep restoration formula

Skin care brand Nivea has launched a hand cream with deep restoration formula. This product is specially designed for hands and provides long lasting moisture without making your hands greasy. The hand cream range comes with three variants – Refreshing Glycerin & Aloe Vera for dry skin, Soothing Glycerin & Olive for very dry skin, and Indulging Glycerin & Beeswax suitable for all skin types. All three variants are available at MRP 90 (75 ml).





► **Jade Forest launches premium Indian tonic water**

Jade Forest has made its entry into the Indian market with the launch of two products – premium Indian tonic water and original ginger ale. Both products use zero artificial flavors, colors, or preservatives. Jade Forest premium Indian tonic water uses a British-Indian recipe to offer a smooth and fresh tonic water, which balances sweet citrus notes with a soft bitterness. By bringing modern techniques to an age-old British Indian recipe, the brand has helped create an effervescent and fresh tonic water, which is smooth and light on the palate. The perfect balance of sweet citrus notes and a hint of soft bitterness make it the perfect companion to your spirits and a sophisticated drink by itself.

Jade Forest original ginger ale has the intense bouquet of natural ginger root and zesty citrus flavors, which makes it the ideal all-day drink. Punctuated with crisp bubbles and bursting with flavor, it's the perfect companion to any mixed drink and a refreshing drink by itself. Both the products come in 275 ml bottles and are available at <https://www.jadeforest.in/pages/our-product>



▼ **Luxury treasure box from Sunfeast Dark Fantasy**



ITC's most adored biscuit brand Sunfeast Dark Fantasy has launched an exclusive luxury Dark Fantasy Treasure Box. The product is designed to make your festive celebrations an extravagant affair of luxurious treats and experiences.

With an elegant exterior decorated with the mandala motif, the box has an assortment of popular treats from Sunfeast Dark Fantasy's Luxuria Range – Choco Fills, Choco Meltz and Coffee Fills. Packing in more surprises, the box also contains a premium candle and a Fabelle chocolate voucher worth Rs. 500, which can be redeemed at any Fabelle boutique at the ITC hotels or online, at [www.itcstore.in](http://www.itcstore.in). The gift comes in a sturdy and exquisite box, which can be reused later. It is priced at Rs. 500 and available at all modern and general trade outlets in Delhi, Chandigarh, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Mumbai. The packs are also available on prominent e-commerce platforms, like Amazon and Flipkart, across the country.

▼ **Launch of Tonino Lamborghini Luxury Beverages in India**



A special event in Mumbai marked the launch of the Made in Italy Tonino Lamborghini branded selection of beverages: Tonino Lamborghini Espresso, Hot Chocolate, Energy Drink and Vodka. The exclusive Tonino Lamborghini luxury beverage products interpret the spirit of the brand through an appealing design and a unique packaging style. Known for their high quality

and style, Tonino Lamborghini beverage products are distributed in more than 40 countries and enjoy a presence in super HoReCa outlets, selected clubs, specialized retail channels and in branded hotels, lounges and cafeterias.

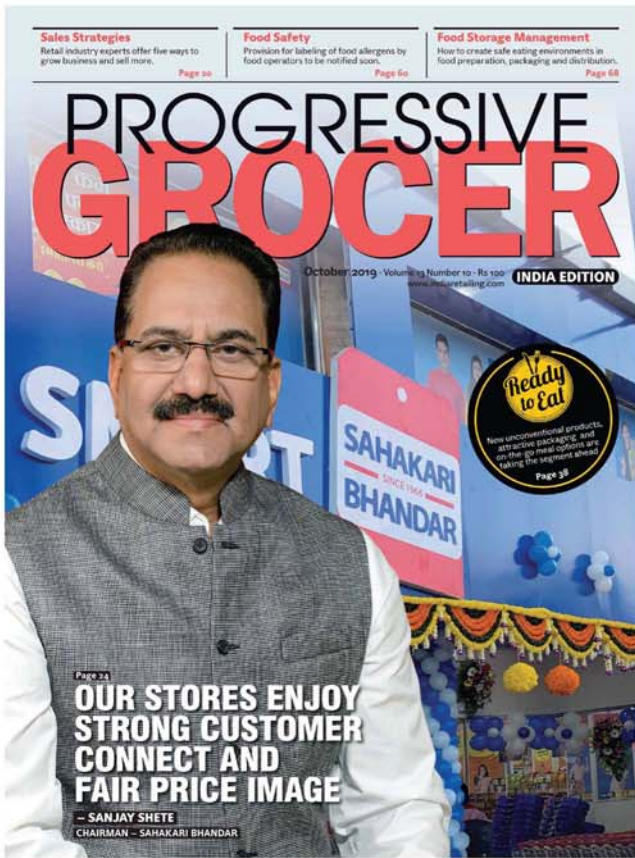
For distribution of its beverages in India, Tonino Lamborghini has collaborated with M/s Heinrich.

▼ **Finest French wines for gifting from Tetrad Global Beverages**

End of year gifts and gifts to welcome the New Year are special and much sought after this season. These gifts are a beautiful way to say thank you and convey appreciation to your friends and family. Keeping this in mind, Tetrad Global Beverages brings you a selection of some of the finest French wines for gifting. These come in a classy cherry wood box lined with satin and also have a pourer, stopper, corkscrew, drop stopper and a 'wine thermometer' as well. This collection of award-winning range of wines are handcrafted and made in small batches that are sure to make Christmas & New Year a super-luxe affair. Available across India, the range comes with price starting from Rs. 1,999 onwards.



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

**FEBRUARY 2020 DIPS AND SPREADS:** The category is in a very nascent stage of product development and retail growth. But new players are coming in with bold gambits and offerings of global taste experiences to consumers, which are helping to prise open this market.

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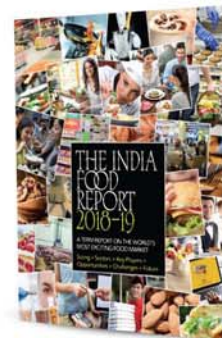
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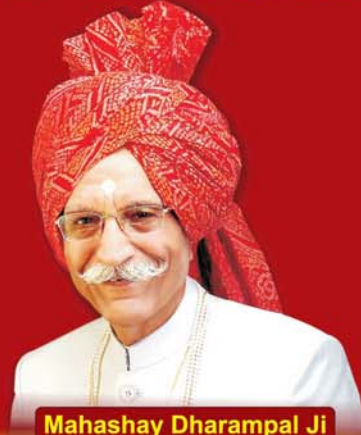
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