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IMAGES RetailTM

Future of Businesses

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ISSUE

[COVER STORY]

USHERING IN A NEW
TECHNOLOGICAL ERA:

**RETAIL
INDUSTRY GOES
CONTACTLESS
IN COVID TIMES**

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IMAGES Retail™

Future of Businesses

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BUSINESS

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Priti Kapil | Deputy Manager
pritikapil@imagesgroup.in

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The Novel Coronavirus outbreak has hastened the transformation of the global retail industry like never before. COVID-19 has led to a shutdown of retail worldwide, proving to be one of the biggest disruptors the industry has ever seen, catapulting the sector into adopting new technologies.

With a phased re-opening being set into motion in the fourth phase of the lockdown, the Indian Retail Industry is gearing up to adopt new technology, innovative ideas and social distancing measures. With the help of technology, which erstwhile served the purpose of convenience, the retailers are opting for 'No Contact Commerce' as the new medium to welcome back consumers and allay the fear of contracting the disease.

The June 2020 e-issue of IMAGES Retail brings to its readers what brands and retailers are doing to welcome back consumers in a safe and hygienic environment – how they are streamlining their products and offerings to adjust to the new 'no-touch' normal with the implementation of 'contactless commerce'.

In this Digital Edition, we bring our readers research, reports, analysis, opinions, roadmaps, recommendations, and solutions from retail experts globally and India.

However, tech implementation is one of the few positives that the pandemic has brought with it. The COVID-ian era has brought the retail industry face to face with one of its toughest challenges yet – losses and closure. With many business drowning in losses and many others facing bankruptcy, millions of retail employees have been laid off or furloughed. There have been cases of pay cuts, no salary, work without salary, bankruptcy etc. making the situation very adverse. The June edition features an opinion about the current job crisis in the industry and will also be discussing the road ahead.

Do log on to our website www.indiaretailing.com for more on the current crisis. We hope to keep bringing you relevant content to help preserve your organisations in these trying times.



Amitabh Taneja

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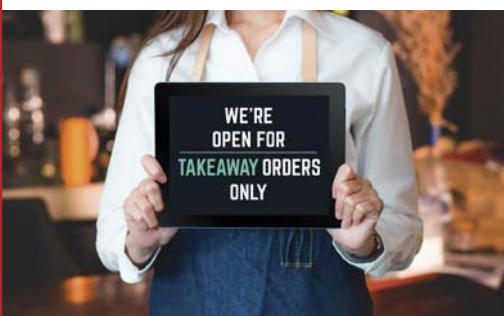
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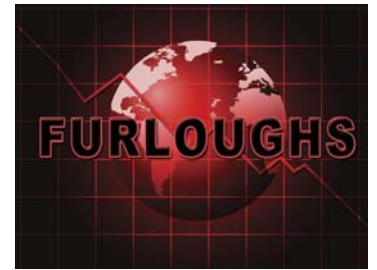
While keeping the seriousness of COVID-19 in mind, many governments are cautiously talking about their plans for 're-opening' their economies. Retailers are looking ahead to the new reality of what life might look like after the initial acute phase of this pandemic passes



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'Serve at Home' Will Open New Business Avenues for Retailers in the Post COVID Era

In a discussion at the first-ever, pan-India humanitarian campaign organised and hosted by IMAGES Group titled Retail Panchayat, it came to light that 'serve at home' could change the dimension of the retail industry in the post-COVID era by opening new business avenues for retailers. Retailers who will be most adaptable to change, who are willing to serve the consumer in his comfort zone – i.e. home – will be best positioned to ride out the immediate challenges



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Many brands are already engaging their audiences and potential customer base on various online and social media platforms, which has, to some extent, been helping them gain lost ground as well as in building a new channel to reach out to the customers in retailing their products

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UNLOCK 1.0: PHASE-WISE OPENING OF RETAIL COMMENCES IN INDIA

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UNLOCK

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has issued guidelines for a phased reopening of the economy from June 1, which will include shopping centres, hotels and restaurants outside containment zones...

By IMAGES Retail Bureau

HYGIENE, SOCIAL DISTANCING NORMS IN FOCUS AS RESTAURANTS, RETAILERS GEAR UP TO REOPEN



Restaurant operators and retailers have resumed business activities after the Central Government allowed them to re-open from June 8. According to a PTI report: Several Quick Service Restaurants (QSR) operators have redesigned and reorganised layouts of their dining facilities to adhere social distancing norms along with additional hygiene features, while some have also

introduced home delivery and take-away. QSR chain operator KFC India said the new guidelines would help people to resume their regular life. Assuring safety and well-being of its customers, the company has modified the restaurant designs to reinforce social distancing, and trained team members according to the new norms.

"We have modified the restaurant designs to reinforce social distancing, trained team members according to new norms and are implementing measures like distanced seating arrangements, demarcated waiting spots in the queues, controlled customer inflow," Moksh Chopra, CMO, KFC India was quoted by PTI as saying.

Burman Hospitality, which is the Master Franchise Partner in India for Taco Bell's, said it would re-open its restaurants with additional hygiene and safety measures, following social distancing norms both on the restaurant floors as well as in the kitchens.

"To reinforce this, we have been gaining knowledge from what other Taco Bell franchisees have been adopting globally and have already started introducing a number of features that will make us the safest restaurants in India," Mandeep Singh Sethi, VP – Operations, Burman Hospitality was quoted by PTI as saying. McDonald's India (North and

East) also said it has implemented safety measures at its restaurant.

"We are studying best practices which are followed globally as well as understanding the local guidelines, basis which we are preparing to ensure a safe and hygienic environment for our customers as well as for our employees," said McDonald's India (North and East) in a statement.

Expressing similar sentiments, a spokesperson of Burger King India told PTI: "We welcome the government's announcement about opening up of restaurants. We are delighted to offer safe, hygienic and tasty food to consumers in these tough times".

National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) though has welcomed the government relaxation guidelines, but said it failed to understand the logic of keeping out bars from the purview of permitted activities and the same must be permitted as well.

"We now await to engage with various state governments to put together stringent safeguards to ensure safe environment for our consumers and employees. As a responsible industry body, we had voluntarily closed down our business in larger health risks to our guests and employees and we will like all safeguards to be in place before we open our restaurants again," Anurag Katriar, President, NRAI was quoted by PTI as saying.

Shopping Centres Association of India (SCAI) has said that the move would help ease pressure from the industry and start the process of revival.





'SERVE AT HOME' WILL OPEN NEW BUSINESS AVENUES FOR RETAILERS IN THE POST COVID ERA

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By IMAGES Retail Bureau



In a bid to support retail employees and their families impacted by COVID-19, IMAGES Group and Trust for Retailers and Retail Associates of India (TRRAIN) hosted Retail Panchayat, a first-ever, pan-India humanitarian campaign.

The inaugural session was co-hosted by **B S Nagesh**, Founder, TRRAIN, and **Amitabh Taneja**, Chairman and Managing Director, IMAGES Group. The guest speakers included retail stalwarts like:

- » **Darpan Kapoor**, Chairman, Kapsons Group
- » **Jitendra Chauhan**, Chairman and Managing Director, JadeBlue
- » **Manohar D Chatlani**, CEO and MD, Soch Apparels

The platform of the Retail Panchayat was used to exchange ideas on possible solutions for the immediate crisis facing retailers across India, as well as the short and long-term implications of changes in consumer behaviour, digital optimisation and economic climate. Panelists exchanged ideas on how retailers could rethink existing business models, take digital transformation routes, work on supply chain efficiencies, customer engagement concepts and how they could implement long-term innovative ideas.

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Ushering in a New Technological Era: Retail Industry Goes Contactless in COVID Times

The consumer psyche has undergone a permanent shift in the COVID era, the fear of exposure to the virus so high that all shoppers – the ones who are shopping from home and the ones who are bravely venturing out – are demanding safety and hygiene. Factor in supply chain uncertainty with consumer nerves and brands and retailers themselves are working towards providing technology solutions towards contactless commerce...

By Sandeep Kumar

Social distancing, masks, and a lockdown. The COVID-19 pandemic is forcing people to stay at home, work from home and buy from home. Despite the lockdown being lifted in phases, the economy beginning to limp back to the 'new normal', and non-essential retailers opening shop, the fear of contagion is real. Anxious about the spread of COVID-19, consumers are being cautious about what they touch.

The consumer psyche has undergone a permanent shift in the COVID era, the fear of exposure to the virus so high that all shoppers – the ones who are shopping from home and the ones who are bravely venturing out – are demanding safety and hygiene. Factor in supply chain uncertainty with consumer nerves and brands and retailers themselves are working towards providing technology solutions towards contactless commerce.

Small, medium and large scale businesses are all trying to integrate the 'no contact commerce' feature in their businesses, keeping their limitations and budgets in mind. Since mid-March, many major retailers have pushed mobile payments as a means to reduce contact. Even small and medium scale vendors who demanded cash are requesting customers to break the norm and use digital payment apps.





Layoffs, Furloughs & Unemployment as COVID-19 Hits Retail Jobs

The COVID-19 crisis has led to a spike in the country's unemployment rate from under 7 percent before the start of the pandemic in mid-March to 27.11 percent. The rate of unemployment has been the highest in urban areas – which constitute the most number of red zones – at 29.22 percent, as against 26.69 percent for the rural areas...

By Sandeep Kumar

India went under lockdown on March 23, 2020, plunging its economy into darkness, the economic outlook very bleak owing to the COVID-19 virus. So far, over the last 3 months, the country has witnessed four phases of lockdown and a less restricted phase termed as 'Unlock 1.0' which is currently underway and is expected to be functioning till June 30.

These 10 weeks have been nothing short of devastating for the retail and shopping centre industry in the country, which has registered losses, forced

shutdowns and layoffs. With shopping malls, retail stores, factories and other small scale business ventures remaining closed, economic activity coming to a grinding halt, and revenues falling drastically, it has been a virtual job bloodbath.

Millions of migrants (skilled and unskilled labour, associates and staff working in retail stores etc.) have left urban centres – including Delhi and Mumbai – and heading back to their native places since they were no longer employed

Job cuts have been swift and brutal.

Standalone stores have reduced the number of retail staff, delivery executives have been furloughed, and a large chunk of workers in the supply chain industry and at the backend level have been put on leave without pay. Salons and spas, which are by their very nature, contact businesses, have also witnessed ruthless manpower slashing.

The worst hit perhaps has been the F&B industry which has cut many jobs and whose workers don't hope to get their jobs back because even with the lockdown over, restaurants will only be

The Time Has Come:

Global Watch Industry Begins Shifting Online to Stay Connected to Consumers

Many brands are already engaging their audiences and potential customer base on various online and social media platforms, which has, to some extent, been helping them gain lost ground as well as in building a new channel to reach out to the customers in retailing their products...

**By Arun D'silva, Director,
Retail Interface Pvt. Ltd
(Brand Strategist Luminos India)**



The watch is no longer a functional product worn to just tell the time. As Millennials all around the world consider a watch a lifestyle statement, work to reflect their personality and represent their style, watch manufacturers are taking note, innovating and building futuristic products to suit new age requirements. The industry – which is made up of established brands around the world – has grown in leaps and bounds, becoming a fashion and lifestyle entity. It is today led by legendary Swiss watchmakers known for designing and manufacturing iconic timepieces over the years.

The industry is now divided into two parts – the luxury watch segment which keeps the rich captivated with its intricate designs and masterful craftsmanship, and an all-new segment which caters to the growing breed of adventure seekers with products, with smart, sturdy products that can do a lot more than just tell time.

COVID-19 Effect on the Industry

Over the last two months, the world economy has taken a hit due to a pandemic which has literally brought the wheels of economy to a standstill. Needless to say, the watch industry too, incurred huge losses as COVID-19 directly impacted both manufacturing and sales, much like it did to most sectors and industries. World-renowned exhibitions such as Basel World, Watches & Wonders, which bring leading watch manufacturers from around the world on one platform where they showcase latest designs, had to be cancelled or rescheduled to a future date. The manufacturers, distributors, retailers who are regulars at these exhibitions are considered the final word in the world of watches.

The pandemic has changed how we live and will do business in the future, which will lay a strong foundation in times to come. While retail sales have been nothing short of a nightmare, the industry is finding newer ways to connect with the target audience, newer platforms that will give the industry what it requires to look beyond COVID-19. Many brands are already engaging their audience and potential customer base on various online and social media platforms,



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