

IMAGES

BUSINESS OF FASHION

June 2020 | Volume XXI // No. 5 // ₹ 100

5

Issue No.

www.imagesfashion.com

**EXCLUSIVE
DIGITAL
ISSUE**

Post Lockdown
Fashion Retail Strategies

Dear all,

The fashion retail industry has finally come back to life with the Indian government lifting the blanket ban on non-essential retail. But while we are savouring this good news, deep down, we are all aware of the harsh reality - the virus is still amongst us and its scourge continues to rampage across the world unabated. Therefore, even as we all race to reopen our businesses, we know the utter uncertainty that awaits us all - i.e., until a vaccine is discovered.

Over the last two months, a lot has been said and predicted about the new normal that we have to adapt to, post the lockdown. But as we open our doors to the consumer, we realise that the challenges that face us now are far greater than what we had expected.

It's a very crucial time for fashion businesses across the country. On the one hand, we have to prepare ourselves to conform to the new protocols of safety and hygiene and on the other, instill confidence of a safe shopping environment in both our internal and external customers. At the same time, we are also charged with the dexterous task of coming up with effective strategies to stimulate consumer

interest/sales and find creative solutions that can potentially move us forward.

The June issue of IMAGES Business of Fashion seeks to help everyone in the fashion retail industry from this predicament. How can we assimilate ourselves to the new normal that is constantly changing? How can we spruce up business amidst this crisis? What are the opportunities that we can cash in on? What technologies should we invest on? These are among the few questions that the June issue seeks to answer for all our readers and keep their morale buoyed during this crisis.

As a bonus feature, we also have a slew of fashion leaders who expatiate on the strategies they have utilized for their respective brands, so that we can adopt them in our own capacities to help stabilize our businesses now and fortify it for the future.

The issue might be small comparatively, but I can assure you that the insights would prove to be invaluable to your business. Do log on to our website, www.indiaretailing.com for a comprehensive coverage on all things fashion retail.

Cheers!



Amitabh Taneja

All material printed in this publication is the sole property of Images Multimedia Pvt. Ltd. All printed matter contained in the magazine is based on the information provided by the writers/authors. The views, ideas, comments and opinions expressed are solely of the writers/authors or those featured in the articles and the Editor and Printer & Publisher do not necessarily subscribe to the same.

Printed & published by S P Taneja on behalf of Images Multimedia Pvt. Ltd. Printed at Samrat Offset (P) Ltd. B-88, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-II, New Delhi-110020 and published by S P Taneja from S-21 Okhla Industrial Area Phase - 2, New Delhi-110020 Editor : Amitabh Taneja

In relation to any advertisements appearing in this publication, readers are recommended to make appropriate enquiries before entering into any commitments. Images Multimedia Pvt. Ltd. does not vouch for any claims made by the advertisers of products and services. The Printer, Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of the publication shall not be held for any consequences in the event of such claims not being honored by the advertisers.

Copyright Images Multimedia Pvt. Ltd. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any manner is prohibited. All disputes are subject to the jurisdiction of competent courts and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only. Images Business of Fashion does not accept responsibility for returning unsolicited manuscripts and photographs.



BATA INDIA IMPLEMENTS REOPENING STRATEGY AS GOVERNMENT EASE LOCKDOWN RESTRICTIONS

As the lockdown eases, fashion businesses are searching for ways to continue to carry out regular business. With central and state governments imposing strict regulations on non-essential retail when allowing them to reopen to limit the spread of the virus, stores will have to comply with regulations and might even come up with additional voluntary initiatives. In a webinar organised by Retailers Association of India, Sandeep Kataria, CEO, Bata India shares his company's approach while reopening temporarily closed stores...

IMAGES Fashion Bureau

While the novel coronavirus has had a terrible humanitarian impact, it has exacted an appalling toll from economies all over the world. One of the worst hit sectors of the economy is retail.

Apparel and accessories are set to be the hardest hit retail sectors with the global apparel market forecast to decline 15.2 percent this year (equivalent to US\$297 billion), says GlobalData, a leading data and analytics company, although the recovery has already started across markets released from lockdown and social-distancing measures.

With the Indian government easing lockdown restrictions, retailers are now preparing to resume business in the new normal. Most hope to quickly bounce back to their pre-COVID-19 business and some are even expecting a boost because of pent-up demand from many customers being stuck in their homes for weeks while stores were closed, though it is probably too optimistic to expect that things will go back to normal anytime soon.

Even now, fashion businesses are searching for ways to continue to carry out regular business. With states easing stay-at-home restrictions, several fashion retailers are implementing reopening



THE TRIAL ROOM DEBATE

FINDING A PLAUSIBLE SOLUTION

Trial rooms are a huge advantage that the brick-and-mortar stores have over e-commerce, and nothing can replace the in-person experience of trying on an item in the changing room, but are they safe in the midst of a pandemic?

Shivam Gautam

As lockdown restrictions are eased and the retail fraternity is getting ready to reopen stores and welcome back shoppers, the focus has shifted towards trial rooms. Trial rooms are a huge advantage that the brick-and-mortar stores have over e-commerce, and nothing can replace the in-person experience of trying on an item in the changing room, but are they safe in the midst of a pandemic?

Even after the pandemic ends and consumption starts showing signs of upward movement, consumer sentiment will continue to be cautious with safety and sanitization being the top priority. It will be the same for brands and retailers as well –safeguarding the health of employees and customers alike will be crucial for them. Human life will take precedence over all and everything that threatens to jeopardise the safety of people will become obsolete – like fitting rooms.



NUMERO UNO

ADOPTS TECHNOLOGY TO GO CONTACTLESS, ENGAGE CONSUMERS

With the lockdown being lifted and the economy limping back to normalcy, retailers are getting back to business and receiving customers in stores again. IMAGES Business of Fashion spoke to Santosh Srivastava, Marketing Manager, Numero Uno to understand the brand's reopening strategy, how it is going contactless and training and educating its workforce...

IMAGES Fashion Bureau

When retailers were empowering themselves with technologies such as 3-D body scanning, virtual trial rooms, endless aisles and self-checkouts, etc., the last thing on their mind at that time was that these technologies will allow them to go contactless in the days to come. But being 'contactless' is becoming the new normal, a part of everyday retailing and technology is helping retailers reach this new normal at a faster pace.

So, as Numero Uno reopens its stores and focuses on going contactless, it is working on educating and familiarising its staff with technology that the brand is adopting.

"Both online and offline training is being provided. One-on-one training has been provided to the team to ensure people understand and follow new ways," says Santosh Srivastava, Marketing Manager, Numero Uno. "Mock practice sessions are being organised to ensure things are well understood and followed. While doing

all this, we have been following and stressing on social distancing, use of sanitizers, sanitizing workstations and wearing of masks. Proper training manuals have been created to help them understand the SOPs," he adds.

In an exclusive interview, Srivastava further elucidates on the brand's reopening strategy, how it is going contactless and training and educating its workforce...



TECHNOLOGIES ENABLING CONTACTLESS IN-STORE EXPERIENCES TO GAIN PROMINENCE:

TUSHAR VED, PRESIDENT, MAJOR BRANDS

With retail stores opening post the lifting of the lockdown, in-store technologies – which have until now have been used in various ways to aggregate customer experience – can be a huge enabler in managing social measures. In a webinar organised by the Retailers Association of India (RAI), Tushar Ved, President, Major Brands highlights how these technologies can increase convenience for shoppers and mitigate the risk of physical contact...

IMAGES Fashion Bureau

The novel coronavirus has had a colossal impact on the world at large – apart from the humanitarian toll, the pandemic has exacted a huge economic cost as well. The only known preventive measures so far are sanitisation and social distancing. In order to slow and even limit the spread of the virus, social distancing has been made mandatory by the Indian Government at all public places. The recommendation is to avoid crowds and to stay six feet away from people in general. Retailers are practically applying these suggestions to their stores, encouraging social distancing

practices for staff and customers, frequently sanitizing high-touch areas and encouraging staff and customers to follow best hygiene practices.

Amid stringent safety norms, **Tushar Ved, President, Major Brands**, feels that with retail stores opening post the lifting of the lockdown, in-store technologies – which have until now have been used in various ways to aggregate customer experience – can be a huge enabler in managing social measures. In pandemic times, these technologies can help increase convenience for shoppers, while



THE FUTURE IS COLLABORATION, NOT COMPETITION

LALIT AGGARWAL, CMD, V-MART RETAIL

COVID-19 has changed communities, businesses, and the world forever. As retail businesses continue to work through the current situation and plan the future, it is clear that the change required is significant - as is the potential opportunity across segments. Collaboration will play a stronger role than ever before - enabling businesses recovery and helping everyone achieve more...

IMAGES Fashion Bureau

The country is in lockdown, businesses are folding up, workers being laid off and the overall retail confidence level is low. COVID-19 has changed communities, businesses, and the world forever. As retail businesses continue to work through the current situation and plan the future, it's clear that the change required is significant - as is the potential opportunity across segments.

"It is a difficult environment for all of us," said **Lalit Aggarwal, CMD, V-Mart**

Retail at a webinar organised by the Retailers Association of India.

However, amid the crisis, one thing which has not disappeared is consumer aspiration. For now, consumers are coping with the new normal, buying only the essentials. But as the lockdown is lifted and the economy starts limping back to normalcy, consumers' pent-up aspirations will come to the fore. However, they will not rush into a flurry of buying, but will learn to live with less, spend less.



FABLESTREET IS PLANNING FOR THE **'NEW NORMAL'**, SAYS FOUNDER & CEO AYUSHI GUDWANI

Launched online before recently going the offline route, FableStreet has primarily been a direct-to-consumer brand. Amid the lockdown, the premium women's workwear brand is further strengthening its online channel and revamping product categories basis the 'new normal'. Founder, Ayushi Gudwani talks to IMAGES Business of Fashion to share how technology will play an important role given limited human interaction due to social distancing, at least initially post-lockdown, if not permanently.

Rosy Sharma

The COVID-19 pandemic left many a retail operation in the lurch, with stores shutting down worldwide and online operations left high and dry with the supply chain not functioning due to a global lockdown. As lockdowns are easing, and retail is re-opening in phases, many brands are reimagining themselves to better serve the COVID consumer.

One such brand is Fablestreet. Like all non-essential businesses, FableStreet also witnessed a hit in sales when it was forcibly shuttered in the first stage of the lockdown. So, when the government allowed retailers to reopen stores and e-commerce businesses to resume

operation including delivery of non-essential items, FableStreet instantly got in to action. "Our immediate strategy was to get our deliveries back on track and ship orders with immediate effect, which we have started doing," said Ayushi Gudwani, Founder and CEO, FableStreet.

According to Gudwani, India is probably sitting on more than a billion dollars' worth of Spring/Summer 2020 inventory, which is not a revenue-generating tool for brands anymore but actually a cost they will have to recover. "Any recovery of inventory which is lying around is good for a brand. So overall, there will be a good amount of



5 TECHNOLOGIES TRANSFORMING THE FASHION RETAIL SECTOR

IMAGES Fashion Bureau

Global marketing research firms have ubiquitously called the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic an ‘unexpected catalyst for tech adoption’ in the retail industry. While the retail industry’s increasing reliance on technology over the past few years goes unsaid, the challenges posed by the pandemic will invariably accelerate the rate of adoption of new technology and tools.

As lockdown restrictions are listed, convenience along with safety and hygiene regulations like social distancing, contactless shopping, etc., will necessitate a new approach and retailers will have no option than to rely on technologies for frictionless services and experiential shopping experiences.

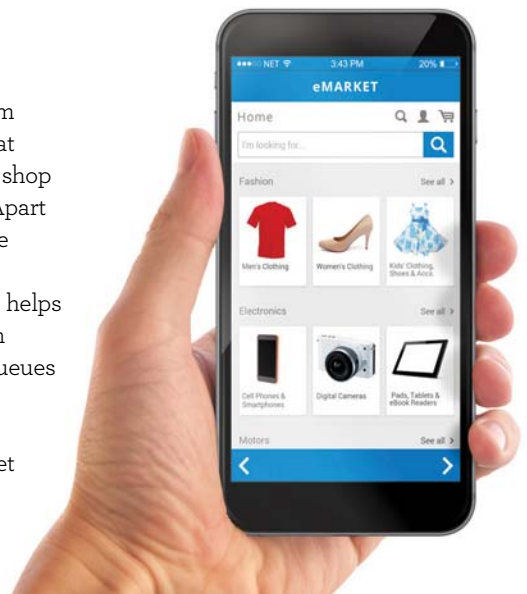
We have listed 5 cutting edge technologies from around the globe that promise to be unfathomably beneficial in the post COVID-19 retail scenario.

>> SHOPPING APPS

Apps find a mention in this list because they are ubiquitous and can prove to be the easiest way for retailers to offer experiential shopping experiences. “Post the pandemic apps are going to pay a big role in retail. People today like and want to shop smart. They will come to the mall particularly and shop for whatever they want to, and apps can supplement the whole shopping process. They can select the products through the app from different stores, making the whole process faster, safer and seamless,” says Arjun Gehlot, Director, Ambience Mall, New Delhi.

Retailers can also pick a lot up from shopping apps like Ubamarket, that has revolutionized the way people shop during the COVID-19 pandemic. Apart from unique features like pre-made shopping lists, in-store satnav and cashier-less checkout, the app also helps consumers check stock levels from home, as well as check length of queues in a particular store.

Apps can also be used to geo-target consumers and present them with more accurate and relevant advertisements and offers.





TOP 5 MOST INNOVATIVE E-COMMERCE FASHION BRANDS OF 2020

E-commerce is an innovative, dynamic, and fiercely competitive industry whose sole essence of metamorphosis has been sustained innovation. Disruptions are quotidian episodes of this industry, and only the technically proficient and innovative succeed and survive the cutthroat competition...

Shivam Gautam

If anything, the virulent coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the potential of e-commerce to the world. A higher penchant for online shopping can already be seen amongst the customers, which is expected to rise even further in the coming months. As a result, an Omnichannel route has become an indispensable part of fashion, more now than ever and even the most prosperous of brick-and-

mortar stores have now been forced to experiment with digital channels.

But surviving in the e-commerce industry is not easy as it seems. E-commerce is an innovative, dynamic, and fiercely competitive industry whose sole essence of metamorphosis has been sustained innovation. Disruptions are quotidian episodes of this industry, and only the technically proficient and

innovative succeed and survive the cutthroat competition. While it might be intimidating, this actually offers a great opportunity to learn from these mavericks.

In these special feature, we collate 5 of the most innovative, e-commerce fashion retailers and brands to help our readers build on these proven success stories.



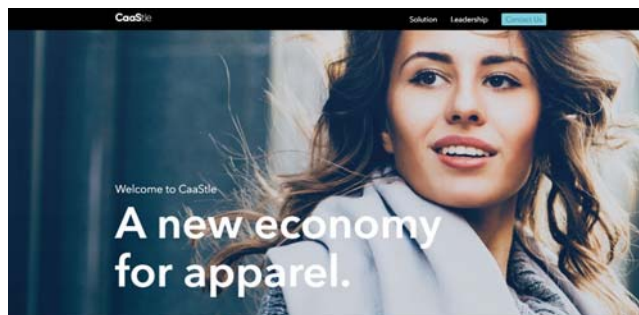
B LABEL

The Bombay Hemp Company, popularly known as BOHECO, has been pushing the envelope to help reimagining the future of Indian agriculture and sustainable living with hemp. The company's fashion arm, B Label, offers cannabis fibres stitched into chic and trendy basics. The brand's product basket encompasses a wide range of modern day essentials – right casual button-down t-shirts and light summer shorts for men to skater skirts and kimono tops for women.

For the uninitiated, industrial hemp can be put to many different uses, which includes producing paper, biodegradable plastic, health food, fuel, and textile. Hemp happens to be an all-rounder plant which not only has significance in the world of medicine, but also the world of fashion.

CAASTLE

With rising concerns about textile waste, renting is the new black and consumers are slowly gravitating towards the modern fashion philosophy of renting instead of buying and lending instead of discarding. Catalyzing this shift is a company called CaaStle that wants to build a new economy for apparel. The company is helping retailers and clothing brands create their own rental services. A logistic platform, CaaStle integrates with companies' inventory systems and manages the entire rental process on their behalf, from warehousing and cleaning garments to gathering feedback from customers about how an item fits. The platform also builds and manages all aspects of the subscription model - the website, databases, algorithms and analytics. If that was enough, CaaStle's Account Managers, Merchandisers and Marketers chaperone fashion brands along the way with their subscription model expertise and retail industry experience.



CaaStle is one of Fast Company's World's Most Innovative Companies list for 2019 for powering clothing as a service for traditional retailers. Brands that have hitherto joined forces with this unique subscription model include Ann Taylor, Rebecca Taylor, New York and Company, Gwynnii Bee, Vince., Express, American Eagle, Haverdash, Fashion to Figure, banana Republic, Scotch&Soda, Bloomingdales and Loft.



ARTURE

Another homegrown brand that has made its mark in the sustainable fashion sphere is Arture, Chennai based a lifestyle accessories brand. A PETA certified vegan brand, it offers a wide collection of wallets, handbags, laptop sleeves and travel accessories for both men and women. What sets the brand apart is the fact that all products are made from a fabric made from 100 percent natural cork imported from the Mediterranean. Cork harvesting, as we all know, comes from the bark of cork oak, which are harvested without any harm inflicted on the trees.

Taking their quest for eco-friendly fashion a notch higher, Arture has recently launched a new collection called 'Reminisce' entirely made from fabrics made out of Cannabis Hemp and Himalayan Nettle—both incredibly sustainable.

Hemp and Nettle are both lesser water intensive than cotton – requiring 400 times lesser water to grow and are carbon negative in nature i.e., that they consume more carbon dioxide than they release. Moreover, both hemp and nettle can be grown without the use of pesticides.

ANALYSIS

BIG DATA

IN-STORE TECHNOLOGIES

RETAIL OPERATIONS

SUPPLY CHAIN & LOGISTICS

RETAIL FORMATS

MARKETING & BRANDING

LOCATION STRATEGY

INNOVATION TRACKER

STORE DESIGN

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

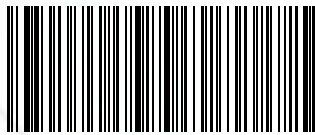
SHOPPING CENTRES

VISUAL MERCHANDISING

ZONING

INDIA RETAILING

.com



THE **A TO Z** OF ALL THE
CONNECTIONS, IDEAS
AND INTELLIGENCE **YOU**
NEED IN RETAIL

[THE AUDIENCE]

Meticulously updated retail industry information attracts only the serious: C-level executives, Partners, Managing Directors, Owners, key influencers and decision makers from across the retail and retail support ecosystem. The web portal is a magnet to the target audience of your interest, including CEOs, CIOs, CMOs, CFOs and business owners in Indian retail – for their daily business information needs.

[ONLINE VIEWERS]

- > Over **3.5 Lac** + unique visitors, on website, per month
- > **5.5 Lac** + page impressions per month
- > The **Top 500** Indian Retail Companies visit indiaretailing.com
- > **25%** Users visiting site via smartphone / Handheld devices
- > **63%** of subscribers are senior management decision makers

Interested in reaching out to
1,50,000+ retail professionals?

INDIA RETAILING

.com

**Advertise Now!!**

IMAGES
GROUP . IN

**To discuss how best to plan your campaign on IMAGES Group's Digital Platform,
Please talk to our Digital Campaign Advisors"**

North India

Partha Ganguly | parthaganguly@imagesgroup.in, +91 9873859916

West India

Santosh Menezes | santoshmenezes@imagesgroup.in, +91 9820371767

South India

Suvir Jaggi | suvirjaggi@imagesgroup.in, +91 9611127470

East India

Piyali Oberoi | piyalioberoi@imagesgroup.in, +91 9331171388

Editorial Contacts**Surabhi Khosla**

surabhikhosla@imagesgroup.in

Charu Lamba

charulamba@imagesgroup.in