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# IMAGES Retail<sup>TM</sup>

SEPTEMBER 2020 | VOL. 19 NO.9 • ₹100  
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Future of Businesses

[COVER STORY]

## THE NEXT NORMAL: HOW HR PERSONNEL ARE INNOVATING TO KEEP EMPLOYEES ENGAGED

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# IMAGES Retail™

Future of Businesses

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The last five months have been very tough for the Indian Retail Industry both on the business and the manpower front, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the organised sector can give a count of the number of employees who have lost their jobs or who have been furloughed, and the number of brands which have shut shop, there is no such census for the unorganised side of the sector on which the impact has been drastic, with lakhs of workers left without a job and an equal number of more small stores shutting down.

To counter the devastating impact of the pandemic, several brands in the organised sector are re-strategising their business plans. While lay-offs are inevitable and hiring has been frozen in the present crisis, many brands are trying to keep all staff on board with pay cuts, furloughs and leave without pay.

In these testing times, it has been a mammoth task for the HR departments of brands and retailers to keep their employees motivated so as to bring business back on track. Despite the dismal turn of events, HR departments of various brands are launching a slew of initiatives to engage their employees gainfully, while keeping their health and safety in mind.

The September 2020 issue of IMAGES Retail talks about how the HR wing of Retail is adapting to the next normal, coming up with initiatives to keep employees engaged in these uncertain times by looking after the safety and health of onsite staff, providing support to offsite staff and working towards the psychological well being of all employees.

The edition features an opinion piece on the current situation of the industry, while talking about the future of the industry. It also analyses how food tech startups are working towards the recovery of the foodservice sector, helping restaurants to better understand customers in a bid to make their business profitable and sustainable.

Do log on to our website [www.indiaretailing.com](http://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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Printed & published by S P Taneja on behalf of Images Multimedia Pvt. Ltd. Printed at Modest Print Pack (P) Ltd. C-52, D.D.A. Shed Okhla Industrial Area Phase -1, New Delhi - 110 020 and published by S P Taneja from S - 61A Okhla Industrial Area Phase - 2, New Delhi 110 020 Editor: Amitabh Taneja

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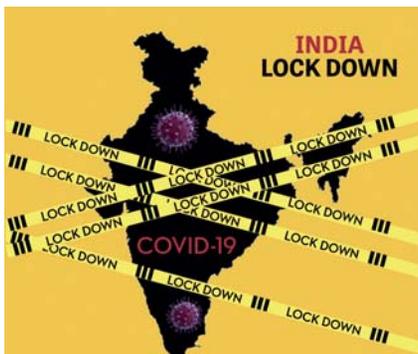
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### THE NEXT NORMAL: HOW HR PERSONNEL ARE INNOVATING TO KEEP EMPLOYEES ENGAGED

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*The webinar aimed to help retailers better understand the role of technology in reviving businesses post-lockdown, rebuilding consumer confidence, and innovating for the consumer*



# Food-Tech Startups Revolutionising the Way Restaurants Understand Their Consumers

The pandemic has made the restaurants realise that the food delivery business is here to stay and will have a bigger percentage of the customer revenue for a long time to come. Keeping that in mind, food-tech startups are helping restaurants ensure that their business is profitable and sustainable...

By Charu Lamba

**N**ever before in history have restaurants completely shut down, not even during times of war, but the ongoing pandemic has severely hit India's F&B industry and local restaurants. According to data released by Dineout, "There is a drop in bookings and reservations during the initial days of the slowdown."

Dineout has seen a drop of 6 percent in the number of restaurants in the first week of March, another 20 percent in the subsequent week and it came to a

standstill from April till mid of June.

"The pandemic has had a cataclysmic effect on our business. The number of clients have gone away. Clients are just not ready to invest a single penny at this moment due to the uncertainty that looms ahead. This has dealt a blow to our company's growth prospects. From growth, we now had to shift focus on sustenance and staying afloat during these times," says **Amrit Khandelwal, Co-Founder, Shoocal**.

The pandemic has also resulted in new brands like BroEat! entering the

foodservice industry. The brand aims to be a relief provider to the restaurants across the country impacted by the pandemic by giving its services to them at affordable fee.

"The pandemic has made the restaurants realise that the food delivery business is here to stay and will have a bigger percentage of the customer revenue for a long time now. Keeping that in mind, we need to ensure that the business is profitable and sustainable. BroEat! is the answer to that very question and ensures that the math of the delivery business works out for the restaurant," states **Pawan Shahri, Co-founder BroEat!**

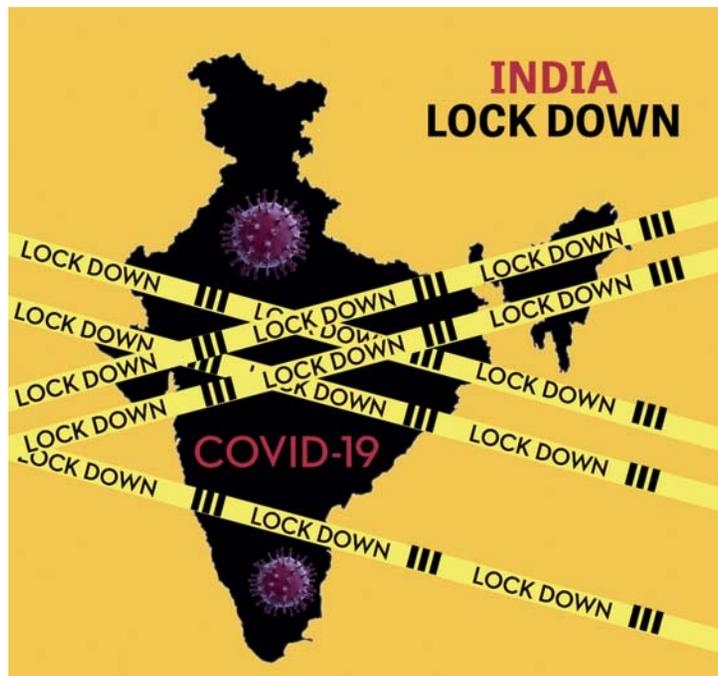
## Understanding the Brands

» **SHOOCAL** : Shoocal's journey, like any other startup has been full of challenges and learnings. The challenges have helped the brand shape into a much refined and efficient enterprise.

**T**he long road to recovery for the Indian retail industry continues to meet stumbling blocks with numerous restrictions being imposed at the state and local levels. Total lockdowns in some places and limited operational hours and days in several others are creating setbacks for retailers as the already stressed retail businesses are getting further interrupted and in turn dampening consumer sentiment.

Retailers Association of India (RAI) said in a statement mentioned, "Although the intentions are that of citizen safety and social distancing, the recent instances of local lockdowns and ad-hoc restrictions being imposed in UP, Maharashtra, AP and Karnataka are making a distressing impact on retail businesses. Retailers are already facing huge setbacks in terms of payment of wages and rentals due to very low sales of about 40 percent as compared to last year, which is due to the extended lockdown.

- » The restrictions imposed by States Governments are further compounding the situation and posing significant operational issues.
- » The restricted hours of operations, stoppage of staff and goods vehicle has resulted in hindered supply chains and skewed buying patterns.
- » Shops being allowed to open for a shorter number of hours leads to crowding because demand is inelastic. This is detrimental to social distancing. It is also creating havoc on the supply side affecting availability of goods.
- » The ad-hoc restrictions that keep changing create confusion about



## Ad-Hoc Local Lockdowns Detrimental to Recovery of Indian Economy

Although the intentions are that of citizen safety and social distancing, the recent instances of local lockdowns and ad-hoc restrictions being imposed in UP, Maharashtra, AP and Karnataka are making a distressing impact on retail businesses, says RAI...

By IMAGES Retail Bureau

what is allowed and what is not. This is resulting in law enforcement stopping goods vehicles and employees from reaching stores creating supply chain and staffing issues.

» All of this is causing gross inconvenience to customers who have to deal with erratic access to essentials.

Contending the restrictions on operating hours, **Sandeep Kataria, CEO, Bata India** said, "Restricted shopping time can lead to unnecessary overcrowding of stores, which is unfavourable towards the

personal safety of both store staff and customers. Longer operational hours will support recovery for retailers as well as help adhering to social distancing norms."

Disrupted by the local lockdowns and restrictions **Arvind Mediratta, MD and CEO, METRO Cash & Carry India**, expressed, "The decision to close all stores on weekends in Uttar Pradesh and to reinforce a stringent lockdown in Bengaluru from today is going to severely impact business. These lockdowns will create severe inconvenience for all citizens as they also bar operations of food and grocery retail and wholesale stores. We have been at the forefront of implementing rigorous safety measures in all our stores and have been very successful in making them 100 percent safe for both employees and customers. Therefore, we would request the governments of both Karnataka and UP to allow unhindered operations of food and grocery retail and wholesale stores. Such hastily implemented decisions by states undermine investor confidence and would come in the way of making the country 'aatmanirbhar'."

**Himanshu Chakrawarti, CEO, Unlimited, Arvind Lifestyle**



# The Next Normal:

## *How HR Personnel Are Innovating to Keep Employees Engaged*

Despite the dismal turn of events for retail with COVID-19, the HR departments of brands are launching a slew of initiatives to engage their employees gainfully, while keeping their safety and health in mind...

By Charu Lamba

**W**ith shopping centres being shut for so long, the organised retail sector has taken a severe hit. Social distancing norms and ever-increasing COVID-19 cases across cities have dented footfalls in shopping centres that are now open for the public. As a result, several brands are re-strategising their business plans. Lay-offs are inevitable for most brands, but some are also managing with pay cuts and furloughs. In some cases, leave without pay is also being rolled out. Hiring has

been frozen for most retailers.

Despite the dismal turn of events for retail with COVID-19, the HR departments of brands are launching a slew of initiatives to engage their employees gainfully, while keeping their safety and health in mind.

### **Engaging Employees**

One brand which launched a slew of initiatives to engage its employees is IKEA. Through its various initiatives, IKEA's aim has been to support all its – both in terms of staying connected and

engaged and in terms of their physical and emotional health.

“We devised an initiative called ‘Learning@home’ to support our co-workers across our locations in Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Pune and Gurugram. Focus was to use the lockdown period to upskill their current knowledge and build new competencies that will be required to meet our customers, once the lockdown is over,” says **Parineeta Cecil Lakra, Country People & Culture Manager at IKEA India.**

“We seamlessly managed to onboard



# Essential Commodities Fuel Retail Revival, Avg. Bill Value Up 1.5x Over Pre-COVID-19

Amidst the pandemic-induced slowdown, essential goods will fuel Indian retail industry's growth in the coming quarters as consumer expenditure continues to remain focused on essentials—particularly food and grocery—reveals the latest report by ANAROCK & RAI...

By IMAGES Retail Bureau

**A**midst the pandemic-induced slowdown, essential goods will fuel Indian retail industry's growth in the coming quarters as consumer expenditure continues to remain focused on essentials—particularly food and grocery—reveals the latest report by ANAROCK & Retailers Association of India (RAI) titled '**Indian Retail – Certainty Despite Headwinds**'.

The average bill value for essentials has gone up 1.5 times after lifting of lockdown—from INR 650 per basket in early March to more than INR

900 per basket presently. Food and grocery, followed by apparel, FMCD and electronics, furniture and home furnishings and QSR will see a V-shaped recovery within the next 2-3 quarters. Other segments like beauty, wellness and personal care and home essentials may take 4-6 quarters to recover fully.

Organised retail and e-commerce are on an upswing. According to IBEF, the share of Indian organised retail will double to 18 percent in 2021 (from 9 percent in 2017). Likewise, e-commerce is expected to more than double to 7 percent from the previous 3 percent in the same period.

**Anuj Kejriwal, MD & CEO - ANAROCK Retail** says, "COVID-19 will work as a catalyst for the growth of organised retail and e-commerce in India. Online spending is on a marked rise with online shoppers projected to increase from 15 percent in 2019 to 50 percent of the total online population by 2026. In other new retail industry trends, Omnichannel retailing is evolving rapidly with brands collaborating actively to enhance their reach. Many are using malls or in-mall stores as urban warehouses to ensure a faster delivery to customers and are tying-up with existing e-commerce/delivery portals to leverage



## Personal Care Startups Bet Big on Healthy, Toxin-Free Products

As shoppers are looking to personalise their beauty and nutrition buys to fit their individual needs and lifestyle choices, while stressing on safe and eco-friendly manufacturing processes, personal care startups are moving towards natural, clean, vegan, and toxin-free product solutions...

By Charu Lamba

**O**ne size does not fit all anymore! Consumer preferences are changing at a rapid pace with changing times. Today, shoppers are looking to personalise their beauty and nutrition buys to fit their individual needs and lifestyle choices. They are also very picky about what goes into their product, stressing on safe manufacturing processes that are environmentally friendly.

“Until a decade ago, Indian consumers were led by fancy names and packaging. But today, they are much more informed about the harmful effects of chemicals

that are present in almost all personal care brands. With easy access to information on the internet, consumers are educating themselves about various brands in the market and what will work best for them. Across India, millennial consumers are becoming increasingly conscious and are looking for safe natural alternatives to replace the existing cosmetic products being offered by large multinationals,” says **Ghazal Alagh, Co-founder, Mamaearth.**

The brand is now moving towards natural, clean, vegan, and toxin-free product solutions.

As per a recent survey by **Euromonitor**, 67 percent of Indian consumers identify themselves as environmentally conscious, preferring natural and recyclable products. Also, Gen Z and Millennials are now key driving factors of this industry and are influencing household brand purchasing decisions.

Understanding the buzz and to further occupy the prime space in audience minds, startups like Super Smelly, Auravedic and Mamaearth are bringing toxin free, natural and organic products to the mainstream market.

# N9 World Technologies in Association with Consolidated Pathways Introduces 'VIROBAN – Swiss Antiviral and Antimicrobial Technology'

In a webinar conducted by IMAGES Group, the top brass of N9 World Technologies and Consolidated Pathways talked about a new technology that they are jointly introducing in the global textile industry, which is expected to add tremendous value to garments, blends...

By IMAGES Retail Bureau

**N**9 World Technologies Pvt Ltd, India has signed an agreement with Consolidated Pathways Inc, USA to incorporate unique Swiss antiviral and antimicrobial technologies into sustainable and cost-effective custom blends for the textile finishing industry. Consolidated Pathways, a brand and technical representative for sanitised products, supports the advancement of the trusted Sanitised Quality Seal and related branding concepts to the global textile industry.

With this partnership, N9 is utilising USEPA and EU BPR registered Antimicrobials in its antibacterial and antiviral custom blends. Now N9's special offering, VIROBAN will provide antiviral performance bringing proven hygiene function and much needed material protection to the textile industry.

Focusing on the momentous importance of this partnership, the discussion offered a preview of the new textile finishing products N9 will be launching, with special emphasis on their differential sustainability and performance, and also on how these products will add tremendous value to the global textile industry.

The discussion was moderated by **Surabhi Khosla**, Managing Editor, IMAGES Group. The panelists include:-

- » **Vikram D Rao**, MD, N9 World Technologies
- » **Ganesh Srinivasan**, CEO, Resil Chemicals
- » **James W. (Jim) Krueger**, CEO, Consolidated Pathways
- » **Dr Robert A. (Bob) Monticello**, President, Consolidated Pathways
- » **Manish Khambe**, Head of Business Development, N9 World Technologies
- » **Prem Sadhwani**, Business Development Director, Consolidated Pathways



« **Surabhi Khosla**  
Managing Editor,  
IMAGES Group



« **Vikram D Rao**  
MD, N9 World  
Technologies



« **Ganesh Srinivasan**  
CEO, Resil  
Chemicals



« **James W. (Jim) Krueger**  
CEO, Consolidated  
Pathways



« **Dr Robert A. (Bob) Monticello**  
President,  
Consolidated  
Pathways



« **Manish Khambe**  
Head of Business  
Development,  
N9 World  
Technologies



« **Prem Sadhwani**  
Business  
Development  
Director,  
Consolidated  
Pathways





# 'Innovation And Authenticity Are The Core Principles of L'Opéra'

– KAZEM SAMANDARI, CO-FOUNDER & CEO

India is certainly a potential market, but one would be ill-advised to take it as granted and to take a short-term position and aim at a quick gain without the necessary pain. Serious players need to take a long-term approach, invest in quality and sustainability, patiently build customer trust and establish the brand. Success will definitely follow...

By IMAGES Retail Bureau

**C**o-Founder and CEO Kazem Samandari, a Ph.D. in Industrial Economy, MS in Electrical Engineering and a Business Degree from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, Switzerland has four decades of varied experience and since 2008, he has been working towards building his leading business in an ever-changing industry. Kazem is Co-founder of L'Opéra and has served as its Chairman since its inception in 2008. He has been professionally exposed to diverse cultures and traditions across the planet.

He shares his view on impact of pandemic, lockdown and the future course of action.

## EXCERPTS FROM THE DISCUSSION:

*Let's start with what everyone wants to know.*

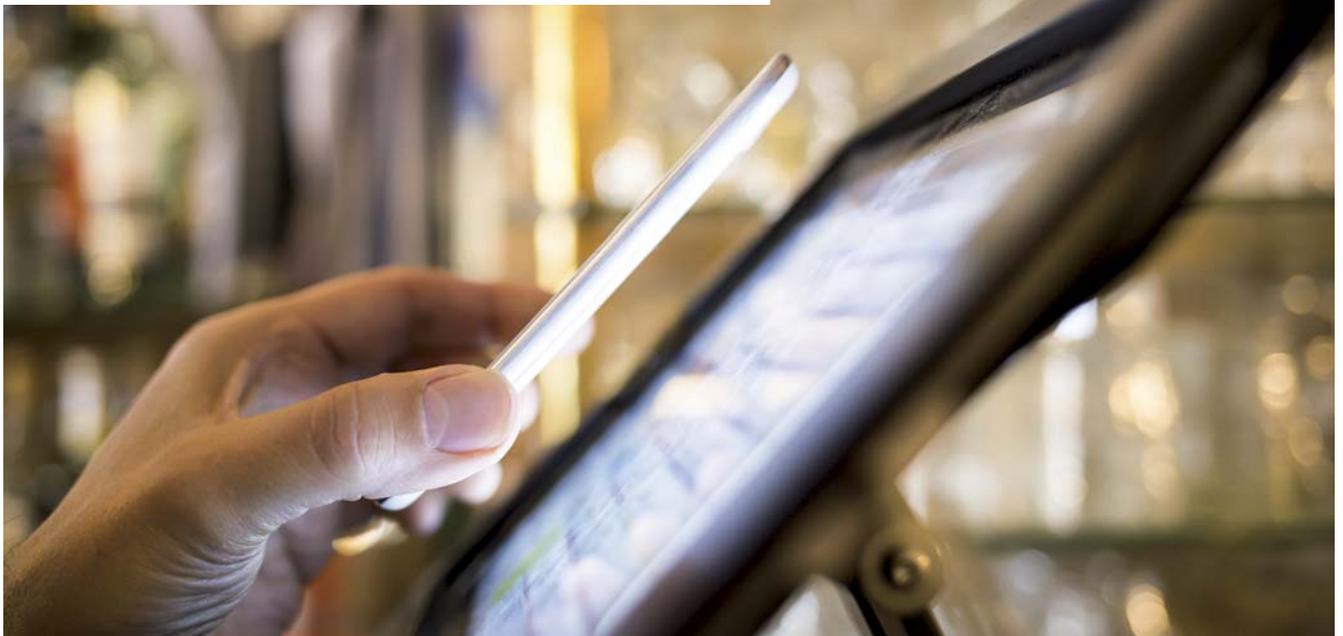
*How has business been in the past quarter?*

The business phase has been improving. We went from total shutdown of all activities to limited (both product wise and geographically) home delivery to extended home delivery, to reopening few outlets for takeaway only, to takeaway and limited dine-in and finally to where we are today which, except the limitation of seating due to required social distancing, is pretty much 'normal' operations. However, there is no doubt that the customers are still hesitant to venture out of their homes as they did during the pre-COVID time and we feel the financial consequences of the same.

# Retail Technology and the Big Reset

The webinar aimed to help retailers better understand the role of technology in reviving businesses post-lockdown, rebuilding consumer confidence, and innovating for the consumer...

By IMAGES Retail Bureau



**A**s India moves through Unlock 3.0, technology is what can help businesses not just recover from the impact of COVID 19, but also to grow. Retailers Association of India (RAI) conducted a webinar titled, 'Retail Technology and the Big Reset' to help retailers better understand the role of technology in reviving business post-lockdown, rebuilding consumer confidence, and innovating for the consumer. It also aimed at equipping retailers with some ground-breaking technologies that could benefit businesses.

## *The key points highlighted and discussed in the webinar were:*

- » Role of Technology in reviving business, rebuilding consumer confidence

- » Need for innovation and how technology can help
- » Groundbreaking technologies for the benefit of retailers
- » Defining the new normal and what has changed - for business and consumers
- » Key challenges that need immediate attention
- » Various measures taken by retailers to understand the new normal
- » Different steps/approaches taken to rebuild business

## *The panelists included*

- » **Ankit Mehrotra**, Co-Founder & CEO, Dineout
- » **Ankur Bhatia**, Chief of Staff, Bestseller India
- » **Kiran Komatla**, SVP - IT, Burger King India Pvt. Ltd.

- » **Rajendra Kalkar**, President – West, The Phoenix Mills Ltd.
- » **Ritesh Ghosal**, CMO, Infiniti Retail Ltd. Croma - A TATA enterprise.

The session was moderated by **Kunal Mehta**, GM – IT, Raymond Ltd. – Lifestyle Business.

Setting the context to the discussion moderator **Kunal Mehta, GM – IT, Raymond Ltd. – Lifestyle Business** said, "The COVID-19 pandemic has brought enormous personal, economic and social damage to many and all. It has upended countless lives and has exasperated the many disruption efforts, laying bare the viability of many business models. Beyond that, it has provided a new set of acute shocks to seemingly sturdy businesses and principles that have guided our thinking

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