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## CONTACTLESS TECHNOLOGY & THE FUTURE OF THE FOODSERVICE INDUSTRY

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During COVID-19, every single day has been a new lesson for the retail industry. Despite a loss worth crores, the pandemic has taught so many things to the entire retail fraternity. It has made retailers believe that technology and digital transformation is the only way forward and as a result, retailers are transforming the entire shopping ecosystem into multi-channel 24 × 7 seamless shopper experiences.

Keeping this notion to the fore, IMAGES Group conducted a first of its kind Live on Your Screen digital event – ‘Phygital Retail Convention’ in October. The event was 2020’s most powerful business event for retail and retail support industries. Along with India’s top retail companies and international brands, key decision makers from retail design, technology, retail real estate, logistics & supply chain companies used the virtual medium platform to gather insights, view latest retail innovations and network for emerging business opportunities pan India. The 2-day event received an overwhelming response from both the Retail & Shopping Centre Industries. Readers can visit <https://phygitalretailconvention.com/> and view sessions which will be live for one month.

In that vein, we bring our readers a one-on-one interaction with Kishore Biyani, the pioneer of modern retail in India. In ‘Kal Aaj Aur Kal: Revealing the Untold Session’ at PRC, he shares his pioneering achievements, challenges faced and life lessons learnt in his long retail career.

In the October edition of IMAGES Retail, we take a look at the current situation of the foodservice industry which is still in re-opening phase and has a lot to do to reach the revival state. A large number of brands, especially the dine-in brands, have shut down their outlets and many are on verge to reach the same fate. The cover story brings you analysis from the experts and brands that with the help of technology and innovation are standing up to the crisis and are looking forward to the revival.

As always, we hope you find the issue informative and useful. Log on to our website <https://www.indiaretail.com/> for more features, analysis and expert opinions.



**Amitabh Taneja**

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## THERE WAS NO ANSWER OTHER THAN TO EXIT THE RETAIL BUSINESS

– Kishore Biyani

In an interaction with **BS Nagesh, Founder, TRRAIN** at Phygital Retail Convention, Kishore Biyani shared pioneering achievements, challenges faced by him and life lessons learnt in Kal Aaj Aur Kal – Revealing the Untold session...

By IMAGES Retail Bureau

**K**ishore Biyani – widely considered the pioneer of modern retail in India, a mentor and role model for many Indian entrepreneurs, a thought leader in Indian business and credited with taking convenience shopping to the masses – is finally bowing to the winds of change blowing across the retail sector.

In a ₹24,713 crore deal, Biyani (59) recently handed over the reins of his retail empire – Future Group, which he nurtured for over three decades – to a relatively new entrant in the sector, Reliance Retail, a part of Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries.

Biyani, who started his business in 1987 by launching Manz Wear, which later adopted the brand name Pantaloons, has over the past two decades created and led some of India's most popular retail chains, including Big Bazaar, Food Bazaar, Pantaloons, Central, Home Town and eZone. A firm believer in his corporate credo, 'Rewrite Rules, Retain Values,' Biyani considers Indianness as the core value that drove his group.

In an interaction with **BS Nagesh, Founder, TRRAIN**, Kishore Biyani shares pioneering achievements, challenges faced by him and life lessons learnt in Kal Aaj Aur Kal – Revealing the Untold session.

*The interview was recorded on September 27, 2020 for Phygital Retail Convention.*

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## Contactless Technology & the Future of the Foodservice Industry

The dine-in sector saw a drop of 6 percent in the number of restaurants in the first week of March, another 20 percent in the subsequent week. It all came to a standstill from April and lasted till mid-June. The only option left for many restaurants amidst the chaos was to become takeaway and delivery only outlets, explain foodservice industry leaders, while outlining their strategy to overcome the COVID era...

By Charu Lamba

**I**t is no secret that pandemic has impacted the foodservice industry just like any other industry in India. The industry relies on people who either step out of their homes or order in, but due to the pandemic, both mediums saw a sharp downfall in numbers. As brands looked for an alternative to continue operations, low demand, and social distancing norms led many brands shutting their outlets, especially the dine-in.

"The dine-in sector saw a drop of 6 percent in the number of restaurants in the first week of March, another 20 percent in the subsequent week. It all came to a standstill from April and lasted till mid-June. The only option left for many restaurants amidst the chaos was to become takeaway and delivery only outlets to ride out this pandemic," says **Kabir Jeet Singh, CEO & Co-Founder at Burger Singh.**

"Certain sectors of the industry which

were already in the delivery business have seen their business grow. However, the vast majority of dine-in facilities such as cafés, restaurants, bars and food courts in malls have been dealt a very severe blow with many casualties," adds **Kazem Samamdari, Founder, L'Opera.**

Many restaurateurs have been quick to adapt to some changes in their business model to offer their customers more flexible, pandemic-friendly dining options.



## Retailers Must Prepare for Transformation Post-COVID

– Bimal Sharma, Head – Retail, Advisory & Transactions Services, CBRE

With rapidly evolving consumer preferences and attitudes, businesses and retailers are embracing the change and preparing for transformation in order to provide a seamless shopping experience to consumers in the COVID and post-COVID eras...

By Charu Lamba

**T**ill last year, retail was an industry that was steadily growing and progressing. However, the pandemic brought a major paradox in the consumer sentiments affecting the industry in an unprecedented way.

The retail industry in Q1 and Q2 2020 witnessed the impact of the outbreak with multiple challenges arising in the business operations due to lockdown and social distancing norms.

With the unlocking and reopening of markets across the country during the

end of Q2 have brought a transformation to the continuously evolving retail ecosystem in India, retailers are strategising and adapting to new market trends.

With rapidly evolving consumer preferences and attitudes, businesses and retailers are embracing the change and preparing for transformation in order to provide a seamless shopping experience to consumers in the COVID and post-COVID eras.

In an interaction with IMAGES Retail, Bimal Sharma, Head - Retail, Advisory & Transactions Services, CBRE South Asia Pvt Ltd. shares challenges and way forward for the retail sector.

### **Excerpts from the interview:**

***How have different retail categories been performing? Give us a comparative evaluation, both from the shopping centre and high-street perspective?***

In the past six months, as there were limited opportunities/ occasions for people to step out, they have been restricted mainly to basic and urgent necessities. With reopening taking places in phased manner, shopping centres have again started witnessing activities

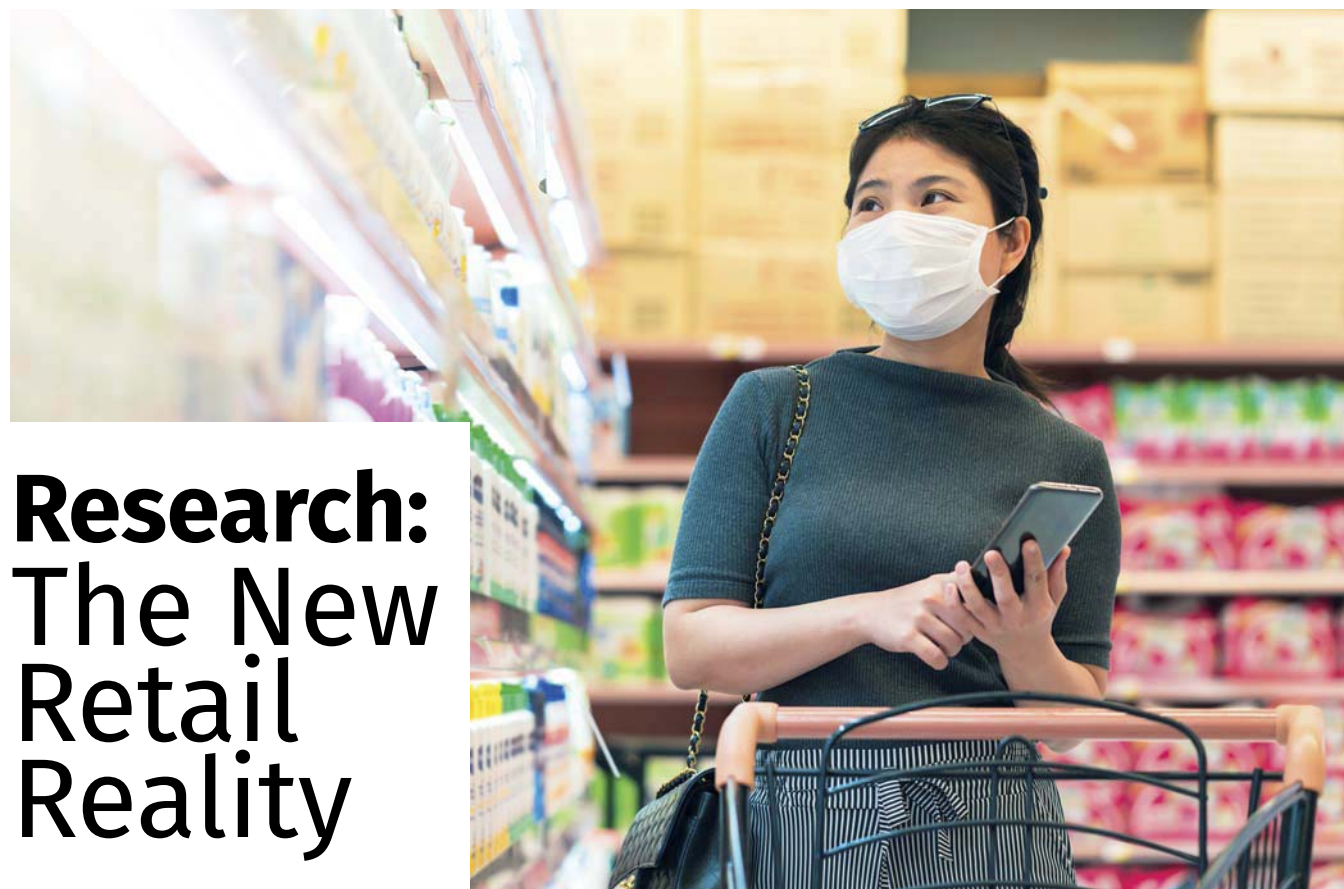
and consumers have started indulging by going a little beyond their urgent necessities. The categories we have noticed trending better than others are electronics, home, sports and athleisure.

Shopping centres have had an advantage over high streets as consumers prefer to visit a mall for an inclusive experience of shopping, food, cinema etc., apart from conveniences like parking and ambience. However, in the past six months, high-streets have emerged as a preferred destination for shoppers vis-à-vis malls due to the extended lockdowns, plus perceived lower risk, considering lower touchpoints/ interaction with people.

Meanwhile, due to the approaching festival season and economic activity picking up pace, we can hope that Q4 might bring back customers to malls under the prescribed safety norms. It is important to note here that in the pre-COVID era, multiplexes played a key role in the success of shopping centers and it has been seen that malls have often improved performance by over 25 percent, when a good multiplex opens in a shopping centre.

In the short to medium term, we





# Research: The New Retail Reality

A report by KPMG in India and Retailers Association of India (RAI) sheds light on how the pandemic has led to a change in consumer behaviour and more importantly how the retail space is undergoing a complete makeover...

By IMAGES Retail Bureau

**W**ith the ongoing pandemic, Indian retail is undergoing a huge makeover. Despite this, the sector continues to be one of India's largest industries that makes up for about 10 percent of the GDP and around 8 percent of the employment. Shopping habits have been largely affected during the pandemic, with safety now taking over as a new criterion over price range, variety and convenience. In India, hypermarkets are witnessing lower footfalls and most sectors

including apparel, accessories and durables have faced a lack of demand. Essential category players are also facing challenges, albeit of a different kind—managing huge spikes in demand, ensuring liquidity, modifying and managing store operations to maintain safety standards, managing employee and health and grappling with a shortage of staff.

While it is yet to be determined which consumer shopping trends will have a lasting impact coming out of COVID-19, what we know for certain is that the digital shelf is now more important than the physical shelf. While many brands are taking this time to innovate and find new strategies for greater personalisation and digital connection, they'll need to ultimately unpack what is a passing trend versus a real shift in consumer behaviour.

The report titled, '*The New Retail Reality*' by KPMG in India and Retailers Association of India (RAI) sheds light on how the pandemic has led to a change in consumer behaviour and more importantly how the retail space is undergoing a complete makeover. Some

of these changes include consumers becoming more digitally savvy, the increasing need for a touch-free shopping journey, price value equation, a rise in consumer awareness, popular discretionary spends, new product launches, local sentiments undergoing a change, increased consumer consciousness and last but not the least the online channel gaining traction.

## KEY ASPECTS:

Considering some of these changes, below are a few key aspects which retailers should consider post the COVID-19 scenario if they are to survive in this new reality:

- » Going Hyperlocal
- » New Age Phygital
- » Using Digital Technologies Maximum
- » Supply Chain Resilience
- » Revised Media and Advertising Spends
- » Staying Close to Customers



# Vinculum:

## A One Stop Destination for Omnichannel Commerce & Retail Solutions

Through an uberised network of digital savvy brand distributors and a connected ecosystem of IOR, custom clearance agents, and digital marketing partners, Vinculum helps brands to scale globally...

By IMAGES Retail Bureau

**V**inculum, a global software company since inception, has been enabling Omnichannel commerce and retail solutions in order to help brands and retailers to easily scale, reach and delight customers across channels globally. In an exclusive interaction with IMAGES Retail, **Venkat Nott, Founder & CEO, Vinculum Group** talks about the brand journey, conceptualisation and opportunity of Omnichannel retail solutions in India.

### Excerpts from the interview:

***Tell us about Vinculum – how was it conceptualised, your brand journey, and what does the company do for the retail sector?***

Vinculum is a modular Omnichannel SaaS platform enabling brands to sell across online marketplaces, offline stores and social channels thereby facilitating selling on any sales channel and fulfilling from any location. Through an uberised network of digital savvy brand distributors and a connected ecosystem of IOR, custom clearance agents, and digital marketing partners, Vinculum helps brands to scale globally.

***What are the services provided by your company?***

Vinculum's modular Omnichannel platform helps brands and sellers to:

- » Maintain a **Centralised data hub to manage consistent Product Information (PIM)** across sales

channels and automatically list images and description of product catalogs onto target marketplaces

- » **Sell on Marketplaces** and manage orders, inventory, fulfillment, and

payment reconciliation across channels with ready APIs to 75+ Marketplaces/3PLs and front end platforms

- » **Enable Omnichannel Retailing** with







## Gender-Neutral Beauty Brands Shatter Traditional Retail Stereotypes

Over the years, there has been a gradual change in consumer preferences towards cruelty free, natural, and organic products. This change has now evolved enough to include gender-neutral beauty products as well...

By Charu Lamba

**B**eauty does not have a gender. People have assigned it. For years, brands have used gender as a marketing tactic rather than a fundamental belief and consumers are now beginning to understand that a good product is essentially a beneficial product for one and all, irrespective of their gender.

Over the years, there has been a gradual change in consumer preferences

towards cruelty free, natural, and organic products. This change has now evolved enough to include gender-neutral beauty products.

“Gender neutrality is a global movement gaining momentum with the current generation. It is a lifestyle, generational shift, and the new normal. The present generation understands that when it comes to skin, hair, and fragrances there are no gender-related boundaries. Apart from the shaving

range for boys, there is no reason for different products for different genders. This mindset has urged many new gender-neutral brands to come up to rethink and rework their strategies for existing brands,” states **Dipali Mathur, Co-Founder, Super Smelly.**

“New-age consumers are ready to break the stereotypes and brands also understand this and thus are bringing more gender-fluid products in the market. For instance, onions are rich in Vitamin



## 4 Ways Artificial Intelligence is Reshaping Demand Forecasting in Retail

The past decade will be reminisced as an era where machines began their journey on the path of intelligence - proficient in learning, executing, and 'thinking' like humans do...

By Alok Bansal, MD and Country Head, Visionet India

**A**rtificial intelligence (AI) is the technology of today, the story of 2010 and the excitement of tomorrow. The past decade will be reminisced as an era where machines began their journey on the path of intelligence - proficient in learning, executing, and 'thinking' like humans do.

The digitalisation of the Retail Industry has been changing in recent years with augmented efficiency, rapidity and accuracy across every branch of business domain. Through prognostic analytics and innovative data exploration, we are now able to make all data-focused business resolutions. AI in the domain of retail has enabled industries to access high levels of data information which

has improved retail operations and given business better opportunities.

Demand forecasting, a process by which sales data is used to forecast the expected demands of customers is optimised to increase customer satisfaction and improved efficiency of businesses through AI.

*Here are some predictions that we will be likely to emerge in the future:*

### **1. Inventory Management to Improve Efficiency of Demand Forecasting:**

AI has helped the retail industry gather deeper data and insights from the marketplace, from clients and opponents. Business intelligence tools created for AI are able to predict minutest changes in the marketplace, shifts in industry demand and supply



chain management. Inventory management through AI tools also make hands-on immediate changes to the company's marketing and business strategies through continuously exploring complex data gathered from consumers. The pricing of goods and services as well as the promotional planning of retail industry's supply chain are positively impacted. Digital portals that provide e-retail services to the consumers

# Automation & AI to Rule the Kitchenware Industry Post-Pandemic

Kitchens across the world over are set to become more intelligent with smart appliances, bot chefs, voice assistant, tailor-made menus and perfect dishes, therefore, the kitchenware industry is set to evolve technically...

By Ravi Saxena, MD, Wonderchef

**T**he COVID-19 outbreak across the world brought sudden changes in almost all spheres of life. Besides enforcing the new normal, it has had a deep effect of the psychology of the people as well as the governments. It is predicted that even after the end of the pandemic, the new normal will stay in place so as to avoid any other future catastrophe like COVID-19.

As the world gradually adapts to the changed order, almost all the countries including India are gearing-up to help the businesses start all over again after the lockdown. As the country gradually unlocks, slowly but steadily businesses are gaining pace and helping the economy revive. However, the million-dollar question at this moment is how soon we will be able to reach

the pre-COVID levels of business in all sectors. Among all the uncertainties floating around, one thing is certain; all the businesses will have to find new strategies, invest in new technologies and device new ideas to adapt to the new way of business and consumer mindset in the post-COVID world.

## Coming Back on Track

Like all other sectors, the kitchenware industry too is gradually but progressively finding its lost ground. Although even during the lockdown, the online sales did not stop, in the past few weeks with new guidelines in place the over the counter sales have also started picking up. The lengthy lockdown period forced consumers to stay back at home, however, with new guidelines and SOPs



in place and the businesses strictly following them, customers are regaining confidence of coming out of their homes and shop for their favourite brands.

One needs to be mindful of the fact that a large portion of Indian consumers are still not totally confident about online shopping and prefer visiting retail stores for their shopping needs. The consumer confidence is having domino effect on the businesses and the entire industry is striving to find new ways to make the consumer experience safer, more hygienic and assuring.

The COVID-19 outbreak had a strong impact on the consumer psychology and the lot is bound to change in the way





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