

HOW E-COMMERCE HELPED MSMEs SUSTAIN AND SURVIVE
THE HEADWINDS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

Ahead of What's Next

Progressive GROCER

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STORE OPERATIONS

Amazon's Just Walk Out technology will transform the store experience in ways that are only limited by the imagination.

SUPPLY CHAIN

New micro-fulfilment centres offer speed and efficiency improvements.

INDIA EDITION



CATEGORY WATCH SNACKS

Brands and Retailers rush to introduce new, fun, healthy and more convenient ways to better connect with the consumers.



Needs Supermarket

Gurgaon's First and Most
Successful Independent
F&G Retailer



— ARUN KHATTAR, CEO, NEEDS SUPERMARKET

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E

very industry has winners and losers, but there are those who believe that smaller retailers are disadvantaged by larger chains that abuse their power. There might be some truth to this, but it's a good time to look closely at such an argument. Independent grocers have been feeling the financial squeeze of the anticompetitive tactics of Big Grocery for years. However, as the rhetoric has been ratcheted up in the long-running battle,

the questions become whether independent grocery can win, what would winning look like, and who is the real enemy?

Big Grocery employs anticompetitive tactics to demand unfair terms from suppliers, which in turn disadvantages independent grocers. However, there's another side to the coin. Big Grocery also has a good story to tell about access to affordable food, job creation and career opportunities, social justice initiatives, and sustainability.

But independent grocers have their share of size-related advantages. However, if there's one thing that should concern grocers large and small, it's the introduction of new business models from upstart competitors that aren't concerned about irregularities in the playing field. These food retailing alternatives have made the industry more competitive and more fragmented than ever, assuming one looks at competition more broadly than Big Grocery versus independent grocer.

Amitabh Taneja
Editor-in-Chief

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NEEDS SUPERMARKET

Since launching its first outlet in the year 2000 in DLF Gurgaon at a time when Modern Trade Food and Grocery stores were nowhere on the retail horizons of the Millennium City, Needs Supermarket has grown to add 26 large, medium and small stores to its kitty, clocking an admirable run rate on various parameters of retailing excellence along the way.



AJAY DHAR, MD AND ARUN KHATTAR, CEO, NEEDS SUPERMARKET



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Snacking is now an established trend for most Indian consumers, who today want a variety of easy-to-carry, price-effective snacks that do not compromise on taste and nutrition even as brands and retailers rush to introduce new, fun, healthy and more convenient ways to better connect with the growing snacking community.



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With food and grocery sales still below the pre-pandemic level, retailers pin hope on the Festive Season

The 18th edition of the Retail Business Survey by the Retailers Association of India (RAI) indicates that food and grocery sales in July 2021 were at 12% below of the pre-pandemic levels (July 2019), as against 7% in June 2021 compared to the corresponding month in 2019.

On the whole, retail businesses in the south of India have indicated a very sharp comeback in July 2021 with sales at 82% of the pre-pandemic levels (July 2019), as against 50% sales in June 2021. West of India is yet to improve and has indicated sales at 57% of pre-pandemic levels (July 2019) against 50% in June 2019. This is mainly because of prolonged curbs in Maharashtra that disrupted the smooth functioning of modern retail in the State.

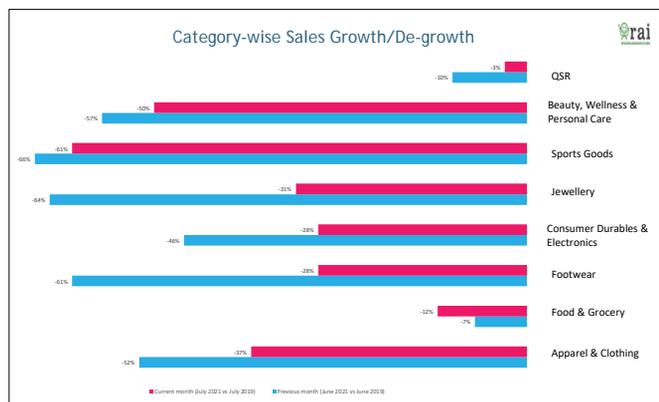
In categories, Quick Service Restaurants (QSR) recovered the best in July 2021 with sales at 97% of the pre-pandemic levels (July 2019). However, Beauty & Wellness, which includes Salons, is still at 50% of pre-pandemic sales, while Apparel is at 63% sales of the pre-pandemic levels in July 2021.

Speaking about the outlook of the Retail industry in India, **Kumar Rajagopalan, CEO, Retailers Association of India (RAI)**, said, "There is a possibility of significant sales recovery for retail businesses as the festive season approaches, provided restrictions on modern retail are relaxed across the country allowing smooth operations and return to normalcy."

Retail is the fastest growing sector in terms of employment generation and is second only to agriculture in terms of the number of people it directly employs, besides creating indirect employment opportunities. Opening up of retail will give businesses a chance at recovery, saving the livelihood of millions who are dependent on the retail ecosystem.



Kumar Rajagopalan
CEO RAI



Sid's Farm launches App for online delivery of fresh milk & dairy essentials in Hyderabad



Sid's Farm, a premium dairy brand based in Telangana, has launched its app for the people of Hyderabad who can now order online and get delivery of fresh & lip-smacking natural milk & dairy essentials. The consumers can order cow milk, buffalo milk, ghee, butter, paneer, cow curd, and buffalo curd from the comfort of their home. The users across Hyderabad can place orders before 10 pm, and can get the products delivered them before 7 am next day at the doorstep. The App can be downloaded from Playstore on android & IOS.

Speaking of the launch, **Kishore Indukuri, Founder – Sid's Farm**, said, "We have seen a metamorphosis in the consumer behaviour & shopping patterns with consumers seeking greater convenience and increasingly taking to ordering online or using the app." He added

that as per Deloitte's Global State of Consumer Tracker study, more than 70% of Indians are "convenience seekers" willing to spend more on convenience. To focus more on The Convenient Consumer', Sid's Farm is innovating new ways to offer more value to its consumers.

The company provides the purest form of milk that has no hormones, no preservatives, no antibiotics. The brand already has a presence in 100 stores across Telangana and adjoining regions besides also selling its products on e-commerce platforms like Bigbasket, Amazon, and Flipkart. By introducing its App, the company aims to offer greater value addition by giving consumers an opportunity to shop with comfort, ease of use, and convenience where users can subscribe, pause or resume the delivery of essentials.



Gurgaon's First and Most Successful Independent F&G Retailer



AJAY DHAR, MD
AND
ARUN KHATTAR, CEO,
NEEDS SUPERMARKET

SINCE LAUNCHING ITS FIRST OUTLET IN THE YEAR 2000 IN DLF GURGAON AT A TIME WHEN MODERN TRADE FOOD AND GROCERY STORES WERE NOWHERE ON THE RETAIL HORIZONS OF THE MILLENNIUM CITY, NEEDS SUPERMARKET HAS GROWN TO ADD 26 LARGE, MEDIUM AND SMALL STORES TO ITS KITTY, CLOCKING AN ADMIRABLE RUN RATE ON VARIOUS PARAMETERS OF RETAILING EXCELLENCE ALONG THE WAY.

PROGRESSIVE GROCER SPOKE TO *NEEDS SUPERMARKET'S MD AJAY DHAR, AND CEO, ARUN KHATTAR*, ABOUT HOW THE GROCERY CHAIN HAS BEEN ABLE TO HOLD ITS OWN AND CLOCK STEADY GROWTH IN A HYPER-COMPETITIVE MARKET DOTTED WITH BIG-BOX NATIONAL RETAILERS AND THE SECRET SAUCE BEHIND ITS SUCCESS RECIPE.

By Sanjay Kumar

B

ack in the early 1990s when Modern Trade Food & Grocery was a distant concept in India, one man was frenetically looking for the right model to launch his own store. His epiphanic moment came when he came across a store named "Nanz" in Greater Kailash 1, Delhi.

For Major Murli Dhar (retd.), that was the moment when he realized the time had come to step out and turn his dreams into reality. Now that he had found the right model, he set about to scout for a suitable location to launch his store.

His search for an ideal place to set up his store took him to Gurgaon, which was then in the midst of a runaway real estate boom with shiny condominiums, building projects and chrome-and-glass offices springing all over the place.



Indian Consumers Work up an Appetite for Snacking

WITH SNACKING BECOMING AN ESTABLISHED TREND FOR MOST INDIAN CONSUMERS, SNACK PRODUCTS HAVE EMERGED AS ONE OF THE TOP THREE FASTEST-GROWING FMCG CATEGORIES AND THE TREND IS LIKELY TO ACCELERATE FURTHER IN THE FUTURE. CONSUMERS TODAY WANT A VARIETY OF EASY-TO-CARRY, PRICE-EFFECTIVE SNACKS THAT DO NOT COMPROMISE ON TASTE AND NUTRITION EVEN AS BRANDS AND RETAILERS RUSH TO INTRODUCE NEW, FUN, HEALTHY AND MORE CONVENIENT WAYS TO BETTER CONNECT WITH THE GROWING SNACKING COMMUNITY.

By Sanjay Kumar

Several industries have been adversely affected by waning consumer spending and economic slowdown in the wake of the Covid pandemic. However, one industry that has firmly bucked the trend is the Indian food industry. Clearly, Indians are willing to compromise on practically anything but their palate! According to Nielsen estimates, India's organized food industry is currently worth over \$20 billion and growing at a CAGR of nearly 11%.

Contributing to this uptick in the food market is the Indian snacking industry. Until about a decade ago, snacking was clearly an indulgence. But over time, fried snacking items moved centre stage and snacks such as sev, ganthia, papdi, chivda, farsan and chaat items made from cereals and pulses have become quite popular with Indians. It is estimated that almost 1,000 snack items and 300 types of savouries are sold across India, with many more unaccounted for.

Most of the traditional snacks such as khakra, phapra, murukku and chakli, which

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Happilo is promoting a guilt-free, happy and healthy snacking culture

Company and its product: Niva Nutrifoods LLP is the parent company of home-grown granola brand Fit&Flex. The company is self-funded and based out of Ahmedabad. Niva Nutrifoods has its own state-of-the-art granola manufacturing facility in the State with a monthly production capacity of 375 MT, which makes it the biggest manufacturer of granola in India. The production is done on a European manufacturing line, enabling the company to produce the finest granola in the market. Currently, the company sells Fit&Flex granola as a breakfast cereal, but granola is also consumed as an anytime healthy snack.

Brand's USP and Differentiator: Fit&Flex granola is delicious to taste and make for a healthy breakfast cereal besides being extremely snackable. The granola is finely crafted and contains a unique Prebiotic Fibre besides having the lowest added-sugar percentage per serving. The product comes in four flavours and are liked for their unique taste, crunch and health benefits. The products are the crunchiest and they are the most delicious granola available in the Indian market.

Product Innovation: It is the only granola with added Prebiotic Fibre, which helps to keep the gut healthy and improves one's overall health. Also, the granola is made through a slow-baked technology and it has real freeze-dried fruits, which give the product an added taste and crunch.

Customer Target: The products are targeted at SEC B+, A and A+ urban consumers in the age bracket of 24-45 years.

Retailing Strategy: The Fit&Flex granola brand is positioned in the mass premium category; Modern Trade & Regional Standalone Outlets are the go-to market for the brand followed closely by select general trade. The brand gets a substantial revenue contribution from Modern Trade.

The brand follows a straightforward retail strategy: it wants consumers to taste its product, and sampling and in-store product promotions are a few initiatives that it focuses on, apart from running hyperlocal digital and social media campaigns to drive consumers to their closest retail chains.

Top Retailers for the Brand: Fit&Flex granola is available at top National retail chains like Nature's Basket, SPAR hypermarkets, Lulu hypermarket; with Regional retail chains like Ushodaya supermarket, Shree Balaji Grand Bazaar

and Ghanshyam supermarket in Hyderabad; Mango Hyper, Maha Bazaar and Big Market in Bangalore; Latha supermarket, Grace supermarket, Nilgiris supermarket in Chennai; Kalyan hypermarket, We Mart, Central Bazaar in Kerala; Deerika Hypermart, Modern Bazaar, Max Bazaar in Delhi/NCR; Osia Hypermart, Magson's Fresh & Frozen in Gujarat, among others. The brand is also available with other top retail outlets in cities like Kolkata, Guwahati, and Pune.

Future Plans and Road Ahead: The company will focus on rolling out all its future products under the health & wellness category with the ethos of "eat healthy live well". Also, it will be spending more effort and resources on exports and private labelling. The company has already entered the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) market and the US and it will be ramping up its efforts on consolidating its presence in the GCC, foraying into Europe and growing its brand's footprint overseas.



“ In today's fast paced life, including healthier options in the diet is becoming a necessity rather than a choice, and Happilo is making this choice simpler and happier for one for all.”

- Vikas D Nahar, Founder, Happilo International Pvt. Ltd.



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Consumption trends in F&G / FMCG market; Innovations by brands and retailers; Success Stories/ Case studies on interesting concepts in F&G/ FMCG; The scope of 'Make in India' in the food sector; Modern Cash & Carry business vs. Traditional general trade and wholesale markets in India; Investments Opportunities in Food backend operations; Successful brand-retailer collaborations and partnerships; Private Labels; Successful marketing/ branding or sales campaigns by brands and retailers

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Checkstand Reimagined



The Just Walk Out technology pioneered by Amazon stands to change retail settings fundamentally and forever.

Retail's Radically Different Future

AMAZON'S JUST WALK OUT TECHNOLOGY WILL TRANSFORM THE STORE EXPERIENCE IN WAYS THAT ARE ONLY LIMITED BY THE IMAGINATION

By Mark Landini



Amazon has changed the future of retailing in varied ways, and the company's latest invention — Just Walk Out cashierless technology — will cause a rethinking of almost every aspect of grocery store operations. It's an exceptionally clever advance, one that looks simple to outsiders and will likely be refined before our very eyes. I think they're still in "day one" of development, to use a frequent phrase those at Amazon use to stay future-focused.

Just Walk Out will lead to a transformation of retail environments and properties, too. And the race is on to understand the implications.

First, consider what's behind this set of technologies that allows customers to avoid checkout lines forever. Instead, they enter supermarkets with a card, find what they need and just make for the exit.

Credit Amazon's relentless focus on the customer for this radical innovation. Say what you like, but the company won't do anything that doesn't benefit customers. This includes everything at its testbed Amazon Go, where the company has had years of experience with this special combination of remote detection and virtual carts. In this way, Amazon rises above the criticism.

How Covid-19 prompted the MSMEs to shift towards E-commerce

E-COMMERCE HAS BEEN ONE OF THE PILLARS THAT HAS HELPED THE MSMEs SUSTAIN AND SURVIVE THE NEGATIVE WINDS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

By Raghunandan Saraf



There are always two sides to every coin. And, the saying holds true for every situation in life as well. When the coronavirus spread began and Covid-19 started showing its vast negative impacts across businesses, domains, sectors, et cetera, most of the people were of the opinion that the pandemic will eventually leave us only with negative effects and lessons.

But it seems that as the coronavirus spread is gradually dying down and normalcy has been restored in the market, the pandemic has left us with one of the biggest positive things, which proved really beneficial for most of the businesses - shift towards the e-commerce ecosystem of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

Paradigm Shift

MSMEs cutting across domains have shown a tremendously positive shift towards the e-commerce ecosystem. It goes without saying that e-commerce was one of the pillars that helped MSMEs sustain and survive the negative winds of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Contactless delivery

When most of us were locked inside our homes due to the lockdown-related restrictions to curtail the spread of coronavirus, it was e-commerce that came to the rescue of most of the micro, small and medium businesses as the trade houses kept running by shifting businesses online. Stores went online to offer services to their customers and continued to earn at least some amount of money to manage the basic expenses.

Turning crisis into opportunity

Many SME business houses that eagerly wanted to make a transition from offline to online trade but kept procrastinating it in the name of some circumstances or the other finally turned this crisis into an opportunity in the view of pandemic. When the

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