

AGRITECH SOLUTIONS: INCREASED AWARENESS OF TECHNOLOGY AMONG THE FARMING COMMUNITY IS ACCELERATING THE ADOPTION OF AGRITECH.

Ahead of What's Next

# Progressive GROCER

November 2021

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## RETAIL MODERNIZATION

Eliminate legacy models and set up new processes to solve today's problems.

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Snacking with health in mind.

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How household penetration is a key factor for FMCGs.

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## PROMISING FOOD BRANDS

New brands are launching innovative products to meet an ever-growing array of consumer needs and desires.



## RELIANCE RETAIL'S FORAY INTO ULTRA-PREMIUM GROCERY SEGMENT

Raises the Bar by Creating New Retail Formats  
and Food Concepts

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Between 2013 and 2019, India's food & grocery market doubled from \$300 billion to \$600 billion and is expected to jump another \$200 billion by 2024, according to consultancy firm RedSeer. This growth will be propelled by new and emerging retail segments, created by our food brands and grocers.

Already, established food categories are being explored deeper and developed further for creating newer sub-categories. For example, the good-for-you health food segment has now spawned several newer categories like gluten-free, lactose-free, vegan, and other Free-from foods.

Acting as the spear-head of this change-and-churn in the industry are new food players and promising young brands. Our lead story in this issue "Promising Brands in the Food Industry" (pages 30-40), looks at some of these up-and-coming players that are trying to meet an ever-growing array of emerging consumer needs and desires by launching exciting new products.

These food brands are receiving the much-needed support from the retailers. With their pulse on the market and consumer preferences, top retailers like Reliance Retail (see pages 18-24) are reaching out to brands selling new products with a special niche and value proposition.

In the years ahead, I foresee many more new food brands to establish and position themselves to capture the imagination and evolving preferences of Indian consumers.

**Amitabh Taneja**  
Editor-in-Chief

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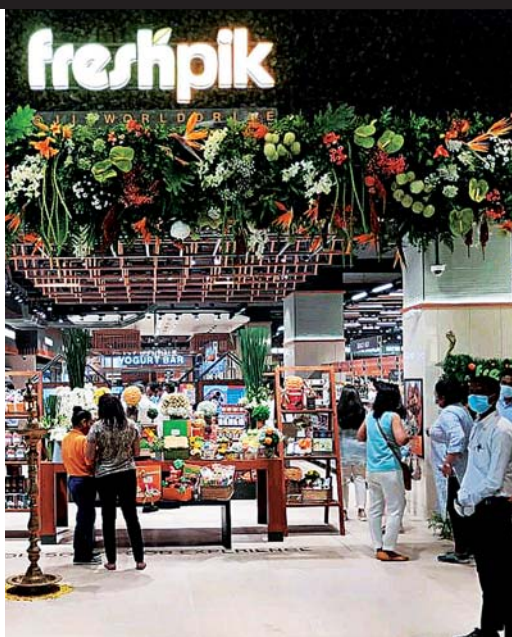
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### HOW RELIANCE RETAIL IS RAISING THE BAR BY CREATING NEW RETAIL FORMATS AND FOOD CONCEPTS

Last month, Reliance Retail caused a stir by bringing an International convenience store chain to India under the franchise model and launching the country's first experiential gourmet superstore in Mumbai, marking its entry into the ultra-premium food and grocery segment. The launch of Freshpik can be seen as the start of a promising new chapter towards opening more gourmet stores in cities like Delhi, Bangalore, Gurgaon, among others.



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Dollar General doesn't describe itself as a grocer, but moves that the company has made in merchandising, operations and supply chain tell a different story. Here's why the operator of a growing base of 18,000 stores was named Progressive Grocer's Retailer of the Year.

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How can retailers increase operational efficiency with actionable insights.

**NEWS**



**Amazon completes Fresh, Pantry integration; single online grocery store Amazon Fresh goes live**

**E**-commerce major Amazon has announced the completion of the merger of its grocery stores Fresh and Pantry into a single unified store called Amazon Fresh in India. The Amazon Fresh store went live on November 12. Amazon customers from more than 300 cities across the country can now place their grocery orders via Amazon Fresh. Amazon had announced the integration of the Pantry store into Fresh in select cities in February early this year.

**Siddharth Nambiar, Director, Category Management, Amazon India**, said, "This launch has allowed us to simplify the shopping experience for groceries via our dedicated Amazon Fresh app-in-app experience, and sets us up to deliver many new features and enhancements in the coming months. Apart from offering great savings, Amazon Fresh will also reduce barriers to grocery shopping online." "With this new launch, all items will get delivered in a single convenient shipment delivered between 1-3 days depending on the customer's location," he added.

The US-based e-commerce giant is currently receiving nearly 65 per cent of orders and over 85 per cent of new customers on Amazon.in from tier 2 and 3 cities in the country. "In top cities such as Bhubaneswar, Patna, and Lucknow, we've seen a lot of adoption for online grocery shopping post pandemic. We will continue to build on our presence and quality of service in these cities to further accelerate new customer adoption," said Nambiar.

**Wingreens Farms Raises INR 124 Cr From Investcorp To Expand Into D2C Market**

**W**ingreens Farms has raised INR 124 crore (\$17 Mn) in a Series C funding round led by Investcorp. Omidyar Network India also participated in the funding round. Founded in 2011 by Anju Srivastava and Arun Srivastava, Wingreens sells all kinds of packaged food products, including healthy snacks, sauces and spreads, spice mixes, specialty bakery, breakfast cereals, non-dairy milk, protein shakes and a wide assortment of organic products.

In March this year, the startup had acquired organic juice startup Raw Pressery at one-fifth of its previous market valuation in a distress sale. In 2019, the Gurugram-based food and beverage maker had raised \$17 Mn in Series B funding from Sequoia Capital and responsAbility. The startup has an omnichannel distribution strategy with an offline retail footprint in over 200 cities in the country. It also launched a new direct-to-consumer (D2C) website called theWingreensWorld.com, which features products from recently-acquired Raw Pressery.

"We are delighted to welcome Investcorp and Omidyar Network India to the Wingreens family. Their valuable experience and resources will empower us to onboard many more new age food and beverage brands on the WingreensWorld.com platform with an online and offline presence," said **Anju Srivastava, Founder and Managing Director of the startup**.

Many companies are looking to adapt to the changing eating habits of millennial customers. According to a study conducted by Euromonitor, 44% of urban millennials skipped breakfast and delayed meals. Consumers also took to increased consumption of fruits, vegetables and whole grains: an emerging post-Covid trend.



**Online grocery delivery start-up Zepto raises \$60 million**

**M**umbai-based Zepto, an online grocery delivery start-up that was founded earlier this year by teenagers Aadit Palicha and Kaivalya Vohra, has raised \$60 million-worth funding in the early-stage round led by Glade Brook Capital, Nexus and Y Combinator. The funding also included participation from angel investors such as Lachy Groom, **Neeraj Arora** and **Manik Gupta** among others. Zepto promises grocery deliveries in 10 minutes (for up to 90% of orders) through its network of dark stores and

micro warehouses. It was during the lockdown of 2020 that, disheartened by the state of affairs in the online grocery delivery market, the duo decided to launch the brand. Zepto CEO Palicha says that even though the company has only announced the funding round now, it has already been operating with the capital raised in order to fund the launch of operations in cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Gurugram.

The new-age delivery start-up claims that



it makes the 10-minute delivery window possible through its dark stores and cold rooms that have been custom-designed to facilitate ease of navigation, allowing packers to move as quickly as possible to pack the items in an order. The company now hopes to expand to other cities as well.





# How the Growing Agritech Boom Bodes Well For India's Agriculture Economy

INCREASED AWARENESS OF TECHNOLOGY AMONG THE FARMING COMMUNITY, AND THE GOVERNMENT'S PUSH TOWARDS CREATING INCUBATORS AND AWARDED GRANTS, AMONG OTHER FACTORS, ARE ACCELERATING THE ADOPTION OF AGRITECH BUT PROBLEMS SUCH AS FRAGMENTED SUPPLY CHAINS AND WASTAGE OF PRODUCE DUE TO LACK OF STORAGE FACILITIES POSE A CHALLENGE.

By Deepak Yadav


India's agritech ecosystem is one of the fastest growing in the world. The country is home to the third-largest number of agritech start-ups, and we are also the third-largest recipient of agritech funding, right behind the United States and Germany. In fact, in 2020, India garnered investments worth US\$ 329 million from private equity and venture capitalist firms. The sector also registered a whopping CAGR of ~53% from US\$ 91 million in 2017 to US\$ 329 million in 2020. And this is just the tip of the iceberg; even with these impressive numbers, India's agritech sector is yet under 1% of its true market potential. This means that the scope for growth and innovation is limitless, and the pandemic has acted as one of the biggest catalysts for the agritech sector to boom.

In addition to the pandemic having accelerated the timeline for the adoption of agritech, there are a myriad other factors that have led to the sector's rise. Most importantly, this paradigm shift has been driven by the penetration of high speed internet across urban, semi-urban and rural areas. Increased awareness of technology among the farming community, and the government's push towards creating incubators and awarding grants has also helped.

Despite all of this progress and the government's best efforts, massive pain points continue to linger

# Raising the Bar by Creating New Retail Formats and Food Concepts

INDIA'S LARGEST RETAILER WITH NEARLY 1300 STORES UNDER ITS WING ACROSS VARIOUS BUSINESS CATEGORIES AND RETAIL FORMATS IS NOT CONTENT TO REST ON ITS LAURELS OR EVEN TAKE A BREATHER. WHETHER IT IS CREATING NEW FORMATS, FORAYING INTO NEW CONSUMER SEGMENTS OR CRANKING UP ITS STORE COUNT, RELIANCE RETAIL HAS SHOWN ITSELF TO BE UNSTOPPABLE.

 **If good food is your thing, Freshpik is a paradise. It's a playground to delight all our senses, touch, see, smell, hear, taste, enjoy. Freshpik is a food experience, not just a store".**

– Damodar Mall,  
CEO Grocery Retail  
Reliance Retail

LAST MONTH, RELIANCE RETAIL CAUSED A STIR BY BRINGING AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENIENCE STORE CHAIN TO INDIA UNDER THE FRANCHISE MODEL AND LAUNCHING THE COUNTRY'S FIRST EXPERIENTIAL GOURMET SUPERSTORE IN MUMBAI, MARKING ITS ENTRY INTO THE ULTRA-PREMIUM FOOD AND GROCERY SEGMENT.

THE LAUNCH OF FRESHPIK CAN BE SEEN AS THE START OF A PROMISING NEW CHAPTER TOWARDS OPENING MORE GOURMET STORES IN CITIES LIKE DELHI, BANGALORE, GURGAON, AMONG OTHERS. WITH ABOUT 800 FOOD AND GROCERY STORES ACROSS 180 TOWNS AND CITIES, OPERATING MOSTLY IN THE VALUE AND MASS SEGMENT, RELIANCE RETAIL'S FORAY INTO THE SUPER-PREMIUM GROCERY SPACE AND HOW IT MOVES AHEAD WILL BE WATCHED WITH KEEN INTEREST AND ANTICIPATION.

By Sanjay Kumar





**L**ast month, Reliance Retail made a big splash with two spectacular store launches in quick succession. First, came the grand debut of International convenience stores chain 7-Eleven in India with the maiden launch in Andheri East, Mumbai. Following close on the heels was another glittering launch of Freshpik, Reliance Retail's ultra-premium grocery superstore, at the ritzy Jio World Drive in Bandra-Kurla Complex, Mumbai.

The new launches have further burnished Reliance Retail's credentials as the largest and most profitable retailer in India with the widest reach. It is also amongst the fastest growing retailers in the world and is ranked 53rd in the list of Top Global Retailers and is the only Indian Retailer to feature in the Top 100. The company operates 13,635 physical stores spread over more than 7,000 cities in India, spanning 37.3 million sq.ft. of retail space across retail verticals such as Fashion & Lifestyle, Consumer Electronics, Food & Grocery, and Pharma.

Reliance Retail operates neighbourhood stores, supermarkets, hypermarkets, wholesale and online stores in the Food & Grocery space and the business is focused on retailing food, fresh produce, bakery, dairy products, home and personal care products, as well as general merchandise items. It also has its own private label brands such as Best Farms, Good Life, Masti Oye, Kaffe, Enzo, Mopz, Expelz and Home One across categories like staples, food, home, personal care and general merchandise.

Ever since its inception in 2006, when Reliance Industries Limited entered the Food & Grocery business through its first Reliance Fresh store, Reliance Retail has scripted a blazing trail of success and innovation across India's Food & Grocery landscape. In a short period, it has forged strong and enduring bonds with millions of consumers by providing them unlimited choice, outstanding value proposition, superior quality and unmatched shopping experience across all its stores.

### Bringing Experiential Gourmet Format to India

The launch of Freshpik, a first-of-its-kind experiential gourmet food was a head-turning event and set tongues wagging about the store's awesome features. This über-premium store is designed to allow in-house immersive experiences across various food and beverage categories with many novel and innovative concepts being introduced for the first time in India.

"All our F&B concepts are designed keeping in mind the refined sensibilities of the modern-day gourmand. Each of them offers something unique and wholesome appealing to a wider set of audiences. Coupled with technology and personalised service, these F&B formats will be trendsetters. That's what inspired us to create Freshpik," said **Isha Ambani**, *Director, Reliance Retail*.



The range of food items offered at Freshpik include staples; freshly picked fruits and vegetables – with specially curated exotic and organic varieties and live microgreens; essential ingredients for international cuisines such as Italian, Thai, Japanese, Korean; a rich selection of finest breads, artisanal cheese, ice creams, frozen desserts and chocolates from local and international producers; and handcrafted delicacies including muffins, cakes, cookies and pastries with keto-friendly, gluten, vegan, high-protein options.

Farm Fresh food and vegetables are always available at Freshpik where you can pick from a variety of exotic fruits and vegetables sourced from across the world. The store showcases new techniques of self-growing herbs like hydroponic and aquaponic, making it an experience that you cannot miss.

# Value-Added Mentality

RETAILERS AND SUPPLIERS ARE SERVING UP MORE READY-TO-COOK MEATS FOR PANDEMIC-WEARY CONSUMERS.

By Jenny McTaggart

**O**ne of the hottest segments of the fresh meat case is poised for even further growth in the years ahead, thanks to pandemic-induced cooking fatigue and consumers' desire for more convenience and new flavors. Value-added meats — which include marinated cuts, pre-cubed proteins and other items that have at least one step of cooking preparation already completed — are getting renewed attention in the store

and online as both retailers and suppliers ramp up their efforts in product innovation and merchandising.

"For the last seven years, value-added meats have been growing and have been one of the superstars of the meat case overall," confirms Chris DuBois, SVP of the protein practice at market research firm IRI. "Beef in particular has had a tremendous run, but all across the board, we're seeing year-over-year growth at about double the rate of the total meat case."

For the grocers who have done value-added meat well — including Wegmans Food Markets, Publix Super Markets, Raley's and many others — the payoffs have been undeniable, he says. "Our studies have shown that the retailers that get behind this and have strong value-added meat cases — meaning enough space, enough variety and a focus at the store level — grow faster than retailers that don't have this, in their total meat case."

Retailers that were already mastering their techniques are now doubling down on their efforts, with the latest evolution being cook-in-bag meals offered by grocers like Wegmans and Giant Food. Publix, which also offers such meals, is now showcasing value-added meats to account for nearly half of all the refrigerated meat at its new prototype store in Tampa, Fla.

In addition, a growing number of retailers that recognize this segment as part of a larger trend are choosing to feature value-added meats in meal solution sections located in different parts of the store. ShopRite, for one, is highlighting prepped, ready-to-cook proteins in its Fresh to Table store-within-a-store concept, which has now been rolled out in at least five of its locations. The meats are merchandised alongside ready-to-heat and -serve items and ready-to-eat meals.

Inspired by a new class of global-minded flavors, the grocers with the most innovative value-added meat selections are typically those that do it on their own, according to DuBois. "In other words, they're out there partnering with restaurants, trying new recipes, creating new smells inside their stores and finding new ways to make it a show-piece," he explains, "and that's what's driving sales." DuBois adds that plenty of smaller, independently owned grocers have excelled in this area, as they've gotten to know the local culture of their neighborhoods intimately and have sought out independently owned restaurants to come up with inspiration.

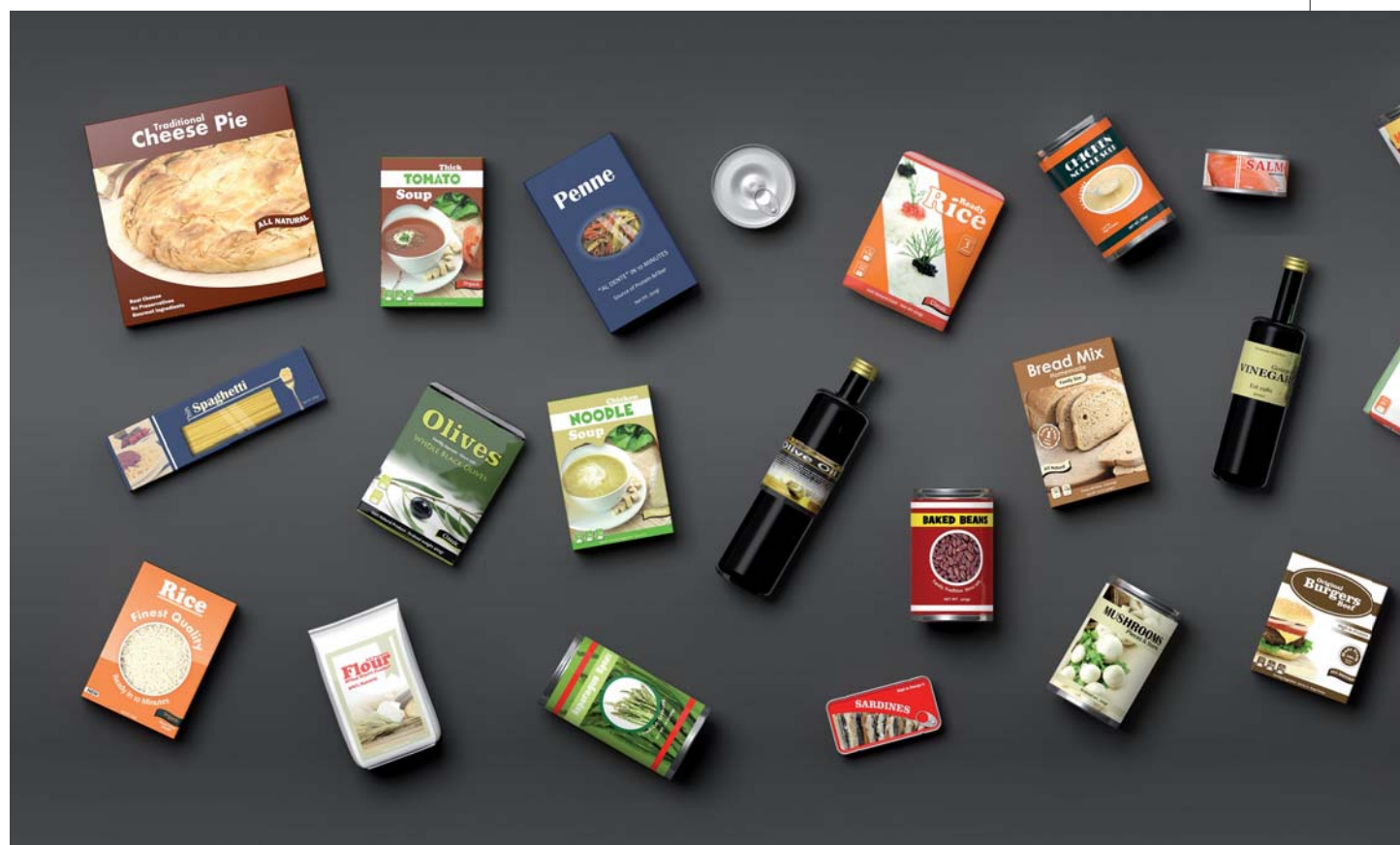


## Key Takeaways

- ▶ Value-added meats are getting renewed attention in the store and online as both retailers and suppliers ramp up their efforts in product innovation and merchandising.
- ▶ For grocers facing labor issues, more manufacturers are offering centralized value-added meat programs.
- ▶ Value-added meats can provide prime opportunities for online promotions and cross-merchandising.







## Up-and-Coming Brands Ride the Trend of Meeting Emerging Consumer Needs and Demands

THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY IN INDIA IS CURRENTLY ON THE VERGE OF MOMENTOUS TRENDS THAT ARE BOTH TRANSFORMATIVE AND DISRUPTIVE. THE MOST PRONOUNCED OF THESE TRENDS IN RECENT YEARS IS BUOYANT GROWTH OF YOUNG AND START-UP FOOD BRANDS. RIDING ON THE CREST OF SUCCESS, MOST OF THESE UP-AND-COMING PROMISING BRANDS HAVE LAUNCHED INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS TO MEET AN EVER-GROWING ARRAY OF CONSUMER NEEDS AND DESIRES.

**By Progressive Grocer Bureau**

As the consumption of processed food in India is on an upswing, the demand for healthy, safe, hygienic and convenience driven food is slated to increase at an even more significant pace in the future. Thus, any promising food brand should have a portfolio of food and beverage offerings that are healthy, value added, value for money, safe and hygienic.

For example, a large number of up-and-coming food companies are coming up with offerings in the healthy snacking category, including roasted makhanas in numerous flavors, dry fruits / nuts with a twist, vacuum fried vegetable based snacks (palak, okra, kale snacks), freeze dried fruits, smoothies, juices, certified organic ingredients based snacks, indigenous ingredient based products, millet based cookies/ snacks and traditional Indian flavors based candies.

The new-age young start-ups and brands are also disrupting the conventional business models. Their contribution to category growth is on the rise while those of larger, more



## How can retailers increase operational efficiency with actionable insights

RETAIL MODERNIZATION ENTAILS A PROCESS OF CONSTRUCTIVE DESTRUCTION TO ELIMINATE LEGACY MODELS AND SET UP NEW AGE BUSINESS MODELS THAT HAVE THE DEXTERITY TO SOLVE TODAY'S PROBLEMS.

By Sunil Munshi

**R**etail modernization is gaining momentum as retailers are continuously reengineering their models to stay competitive and thrive in the new normal. However, successful modernization heavily depends upon a long-range vision and a strategy that predicts and accommodates future needs for sustainable success. Retailers need to approach retail modernization correctly and create the groundwork that provides foundational support for future.

Retail modernization entails a lot of moving parts, and each part plays an equally distinct and important role. It is not purely about technology, it has more to do with the culture. It is a process of constructive destruction to eliminate legacy models and set up new age business models that have the dexterity to solve today's problems.

The retail modernization infrastructure should enable retail enterprises to make sense out of fast-changing and multi-dimensional data. Retailers should be able to understand customer behavior and tailor products and services as per their specific needs. They should have load balancers to deal with sudden spike and fall in demand. The underlying architecture should enable them in tracking the physicality of the product and streamlining supply chain and inventory. Intelligently meshed integration

should enable them to move huge variety, velocity and veracity, and volume of data in a multiverse, and set up a single of truth for enabling actionable insights.

Another important aspect of retail modernization is omnichannel channel approach to help customers in purchase decisions or contactless payments from multiple channels. The integration should allow retailers in getting a 360-degree view of all applications and orchestrate them in an order for business growth. Successful modernizations also accommodate retail audits to suggest, course correct, and improve retail operations, at every turn. Lastly, enterprises should focus on upskilling the promoters to help deploy technologies and assimilate it in the organizational culture.

The retail modernization involves the following concepts:

**Wrangling data abyss:** The most important part of a retail modernization strategy is a data first analytics strategy. Every retail technology has a different storage systems and file format to store data. Friction arises when one instance of data becomes incompatible with another application. The data engine should be able to process data falling from multiple sources and add some relevance or meaning to it. Doing this can help retailers in making utmost use of data and offering tailored products to the customers.





# It's Time Retailers Shopped Smart Too!

RETAILERS SHOULD EMPLOY DATA-DRIVEN DIGITAL SOLUTIONS FOR APPROPRIATE DEMAND PLANNING AND TO CONSOLIDATE THEIR SUPPLY CHAIN IN A MANNER THAT'S AS MUCH COST-EFFECTIVE AS IT'S TIME-SAVING.

**By Kumar Vembu**

**T**he retail ecosystem is not the same anymore as more and more retailers are adopting the digital first attitude. More so, the SMEs. Retailers should therefore arm themselves with relevant resources to consolidate their supply chain in a manner that's as much cost-effective as it's time-saving.

A retailer's focus should be two-pronged: Enhance sales through regular inventory planning; Ensure customer experience by going omnichannel.

## **Catering to the Holiday Rush**

When demand is at its peak and customers are in the mood to spend, every sale is crucial. Retailers must think creatively and put their money where their mouths are. Businesses may use a 'real-time' inventory to determine when and where to spend, as well as the price at which to acquire the relevant items, assisting in proper purchasing selections. Today, many retailers are oblivious of their inventory value down to the thousandth decimal place, with a 20-30% mismatch between system and real stock. Operating an app to track stock auditing can optimize their inventory's reliability, consistency, and oversight.

Proper use of analytics in ensuring an upgraded and better service is the need of the hour. A structured

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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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