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Dear Readers,

These are transformative times for the business of fashion. Consumer behaviours, digitalisation, discounting impact, supply chain snags and sustainability demands are challenging us. The larger ecosystem has started terming the fashion business as “difficult”, whereas it was seen a couple of decades back as an area of immense opportunity delivering secular growth.

As we rethink, reimagine and remodel our industry and become a great force again it's time to shake off what-has-been and give life to the next Golden Age of Fashion Creation. It's time to make the business of fashion great again with India Fashion Forum 2024 (IFF).

Launched in the year 2000, IFF, India's biggest fashion intelligence event, is a powerful blend of conference sessions, workshops and master classes. Zoned exhibitions and industry awards mark IFF's confluence of the biggest consumer trends, market intelligence and retail innovation in the business of fashion in India.

IFF is no longer just an event, it is a movement, Renowned for opening to packed houses with leaders, key stakeholders, experts and delegates, from across the fashion ecosystem gathering to discuss emerging trends including AI, seamless shopping experiences and the prospects of untapped Indian cities emerging as new markets and in generating new business opportunities in the dynamic fashion retail landscape of the country, IFF is the perfect destination to kick-start the necessary transformation of the fashion industry.

This event is a compelling calendar must-do for the whole industry and I look forward to seeing you all at India Fashion Forum 2024, helping us help the industry, helping us herald a new, sustainable era for Indian Fashion Retail.



Amitabh Taneja



Arrow unveils Winter 23 ceremonial collection

Menswear brand Arrow launched its Winter 23 Ceremonial Collection, featuring an exquisite range of premium suits, blazers, shirts, and bundis tailored to elevate the wedding season style, the company announced in a release last week.

Designed for the modern individual seeking sophistication and comfort, the collection boasts modern silhouettes with regal touches. Each piece showcases innovative blends that provide a luxuriously soft feel.

A standout feature of the collection is the reversible

waistcoat, featuring abstract floral jacquards on one side. This unique design adds a touch of versatility, allowing wearers to switch between two equally stylish options, suitable for various occasions.

The collection's colour palette is rich and diverse, offering choices in Burgundy, Black, Maroon, Beige, and Navy.

"At Arrow, you can always expect to find menswear that is both incredibly graceful and radiates a premium appeal," said Anand Aiyer, CEO of Arrow of the collection.

Arrow, a well-known international menswear brand shaping menswear since 1851, was launched in India in 1993. With over 200 exclusive stores and availability in more than 1000 multi-brand outlets across 109 cities in India, Arrow has been a preferred brand for Indian professionals due to its impeccable style and strong sense of innovation.

The brand's primary goal is to cater to the ever-changing sartorial needs of India's working men and introduce exciting innovations for the modern Indian professional wardrobe, the release concluded.

Celio India unveils anime inspired merchandise

Premium French menswear brand Celio India has launched its highly anticipated Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba officially licensed merchandise, the biggest blockbuster licensed collection of the season. The collection hit the shelves towards the end of November, 2023.

Celio is the first retailer in India to showcase this extraordinary collection. Demon Slayer: Kimetsu no Yaiba, a globally acclaimed manga and TV anime series, has taken the world by storm, and Celio's collection pays homage to this cultural phenomenon. The designs, originally a massive hit in Paris, are now available for fans in India.

Celio has 1,100 stores in 60 countries. It carries its latest international casualwear, denim and workwear ranges in India through 63 exclusive standalone stores and 700 points of sale in leading departmental stores.



Snitch introduces timeless collection inspired by Japanese culture

Fast-fashion men's apparel brand Snitch has dropped its new Sukajan collection. The garments in this collection are meticulously crafted with an intricate blend of traditional Japanese motifs and contemporary design elements, resulting in a harmonious fusion of elegance and modernity. The motifs symbolize the duality of existence.

"We are thrilled to introduce our Sukajan Collection, which pays homage to the timeless fashion of Japanese culture," said Siddharth Dungarwal, Founder of Snitch.

"This collection represents a harmonious blend of tradition and innovation."

From fierce dragon motifs to sleek cherry blossoms, the Sukajan collection is a testament to the innovative ideology of Snitch which creates a timeless design.

With limited quantities available, early acquisition is highly recommended to secure these stylish pieces. Embrace opulence, personify sophistication & let your style exude a symphony of refinement and exclusivity!

Is Bimodal Supply Chain the Future of Fashion Retail?

Digital technologies are key enablers in setting up a bimodal supply chain. In addition to AI, ML, and generative AI, some of the other technologies that can help in this transformation are RFID, smart store technologies, digital twins, and robotics...

Senthil Kumar Balraj

The fashion industry's impact on the environment is significant, and being sustainable is a key priority. There is a growing awareness of the environmental and social issues caused by fast fashion, and retailers are increasingly adopting initiatives and investing in becoming more sustainable. Technology will be a key enabler, supporting retailers in this journey. It can help across the entire fashion value chain, from design to selling, to become more sustainable.

How the Fashion Industry Impacts the Environment

Fast fashion has a huge impact on the environment. As per estimates, the global fashion industry is responsible for ~10 % of human-caused greenhouse gas emissions and ~20 % of global water pollution. 93 billion

cubic meters of water, enough to meet the needs of five million people, is used by the fashion industry annually, contributing significantly to water scarcity in some regions. Around 20% of industrial wastewater pollution worldwide originates from the fashion industry.

Reports suggest that more than 50% of fast fashion clothes are discarded within a year of purchase; 30% of global clothing is never sold; and another 30% is only sold at a discount. This has resulted in mounting piles of unsold stock, with several large retailers carrying unsold inventory worth billions of dollars. It is estimated that of the 100 billion garments produced each year, 92 million tons end up in landfills. It is evident that the fashion industry is plagued by the problem of overproduction.





100 U.S. POLO ASSN. Legends Launch Brand's State-of-the-Art Store in Goa

U.S. Polo Assn. inaugurated its new store on M.G. Road, Goa, unveiling the Autumn-Winter Collection in a modern, sporty ambiance. With a refreshed brand identity, iconic colors, and an immersive polo experience, the store marked a strategic move in the brand's growth journey.

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Indian casualwear brand U.S. Polo Assn., which comes under the aegis of United States Polo Association (USPA) globally, inaugurated its new brand store on M.G. Road in Panaji, Goa. The two-level structure, spanning 2,237 sq. ft., showcased the brand's latest Autumn-Winter Collection at its grand launch, attended by 100 USPA team members who traveled from Bengaluru to Goa for the occasion. The store's design features a refreshed brand identity with an all-white interior adorned with the iconic colors

of the brand, complemented by a blend of wood, metal, and concrete details. The special wall within the store captures the essence of polo, creating a classic and cool ambiance, providing shoppers with an immersive experience that aligns with the sport's authenticity.

In the midst of this fashion extravaganza, it's noteworthy that U.S. Polo Assn. currently boasts a retail footprint in India with over 400 brand stores and more than 2000 shop-in-shops across 200 cities. This expansive reach

reflects the brand's commitment to making its offerings accessible to a diverse audience. "We are thrilled to announce the grand opening of our U.S. Polo Assn. store in the vibrant and picturesque land of Goa, a momentous milestone for our brand. What adds immeasurable joy to this event is the presence of over 100 passionate team members of our U.S. Polo Assn. family who have flown down from Bangalore to Goa to be a part of this historic moment," Amitabh Suri, CEO of U.S. Polo Assn. – Arvind Fashions Limited said.

THREADS OF INNOVATION:

How Harita Choudhary Kaul Weaves a Product Roadmap for Benetton India

As an accomplished expert, Harita Choudhary Kaul develops a roadmap for products based on their company's vision, customer and market research and industry insights...



IMAGES Business of Fashion

Fashion retail is by definition, a rapidly evolving industry. Embryonic consumer preferences, changing trends and technological advancements have led to the market witnessing significant shifts in design, production, and marketing strategies.

To succeed in this dynamic, fashion retailers need to turn profitable and at the heart of a profitable fashion business is the product. The simple equation therefore is – the better the quality of your product, the more profitable your business. But managing a product is no simplistic task.

Product management – with an Apparel Product Manager at the center of operations – typically brings together the work of the design studio, pattern cutting and production departments, ensuring a fashion collection achieves the required style, production standards, price points, delivery dates and points of sale.

The job is so advanced that more and more fashion retailers – small scale and large scale – are hiring Product Managers.

When we talk of skilled Product Managers who handle a wide range of responsibilities at various stages of apparel's life cycle from buying to final delivery, we can't not talk about Harita Choudhary Kaul, Chief Product Officer, Benetton India.

This accomplished expert develops a roadmap for products based on their company's vision, customer and market research and industry insights.

As Head of Design, Buying & Merchandising and Visual Merchandising, Harita's role entails defining product strategy from concept to consumer, ensuring that the product offering is aligned with brand's vision and market needs. This includes the end-to-end product development cycle, new category launches, trend analysis, store buys and visually appealing in-store display that showcase the product effectively.

Harita, who spent her early working years with Shopper's Stop as buyer for womenswear and with TCNS during the initial phase of launch of W, says, "As CPO my focus is on bringing Brand appropriate, commercially, and financially viable collections to the Indian consumer across channels. It's a skill where art meets science as design aesthetics, in-depth knowledge of fashion trends, data driven approach of current market trends, cost focus, cross functional collaboration and innovation is at the heart of delivering a collection that is customer centric and unique."

Design & Product Development Process
Benetton's process begins with receiving global themes and colour palettes from their headquarters. These are then attuned to India-specific needs and weather right proposals. "From hereon, creative ideation leads to

Harita's role entails defining product strategy from concept to consumer, ensuring that the product offering is aligned with brand's vision as well as its market needs

EXCLUSIVITY MEETS ACCESSIBILITY DECODING MADAME'S RETAIL STRATEGY

Madame, helmed by Executive Director Akhil Jain, epitomizes innovation in Indian fashion. Jain's strategic insights showcase the brand's commitment to exceptional in-store experiences, balanced distribution, and cost considerations...

Sanya Arora

In the ever-evolving realm of Indian fashion, where style meets substance, Madame, led by the visionary Executive Director Akhil Jain, has woven a strategic narrative that seamlessly blends tradition with modernity. In an exclusive conversation, Jain shares insights into Madame's retail journey, where every decision is a carefully orchestrated note in the brand's symphony.

Balancing Act: High Streets vs. Malls

Akhil Jain, says that at the helm of Madame's strategic decisions is, "providing an exceptional in-store experience is a priority, regardless of location". This philosophy underlines Madame's commitment to customer experience, a thread woven through every high street and mall where the brand leaves its mark.

Navigating the intricacies of high streets, Jain acknowledges their operational efficiency and personalized shopping experience. However, he doesn't shy away from acknowledging the challenges, especially in India, where external factors like broken footpaths and parking chaos pose hurdles. To overcome these challenges, Jain affirms, "Brands must invest extra effort in creating a seamless transition from the outside world to the store's ambiance."

In contrast, shopping malls provide Madame with a controlled environment to showcase its offerings. Jain sheds light on the strategic focus within malls, stating, "The USP for stores in malls is to create a welcoming and attractive interior that draws customers in." This focus on differentiation becomes crucial in the mall landscape where choices abound."



“ High streets offer cost advantages with lower maintenance, but malls can justify expenses through higher foot traffic and a potential for increased sales ”

**Akhil Jain,
Executive Director, Madame**





SSBEAUTY IS BEING VISUALIZED AS A ONE-STOP-SHOP FOR ALL BEAUTY BRANDS: Biju Kassim, President

In an exclusive conversation with IMAGES Business of Fashion, Biju Kassim, President SSBeauty, talks about Shopper's Stop homegrown beauty company, SSBeauty, even as he delves into the beauty sector in India, which is anything but skin deep...

Surabhi Khosla

India is getting a facelift and the makeover has been fast and firm. The Indian beauty and personal care industry is exploding, with market size across the country slated to hit Rs 2 trillion by 2025, according to a study by Statista.

In this mushrooming scenario, Indian beauty retail companies are a dime a dozen, but only a few truly meet international standards of quality and luxury, at affordable prices.

One such homegrown company is SSBeauty, Shoppers Stop's luxury beauty store chain. Launched in February 2022 in Mumbai,

Shoppers Stop has since then opened 11 standalone beauty stores of SSBeauty. The company provides an extensive range of select and exclusive beauty brands including renowned global brands such as Clinique, Estee Lauder, Bobbi Brown, and many more. Its own brand, Arcelia, known for its quality and innovation, caters to a wide range of beauty needs. SSBeauty currently occupies 17% of the overall Shoppers Stop portfolio.

In an exclusive, free-ranging conversation with IMAGES Business of Fashion, **Biju Kassim, President SSBeauty**, reveals all there is to know about SSBeauty, and delves into the beauty sector in India, which is anything but skin deep.

Market Presence

SSBeauty's presence spans major cities and towns, with a strategic focus on key retail hubs and high-traffic locations in India as well as in the rapidly growing tier 2 and 3 cities. We have 11 stores currently, which showcase an extensive range of premium beauty brands both Indian and international.

Omnichannel Strategy

Our Omnichannel strategy provides customers with the option of shopping and engaging with our brands online, as well as the experience of trying on apparel or beauty products in a physical store. The ability to interact with us through our stores

AKUTEE'S TRIUMPH: Sagarika Ghatge's Vision to 3-5X Growth Unraveled

In the fashion arena, Akutee - crafted by Sagarika Ghatge and her mother Urmila - stands as a beacon of timeless elegance. Sagarika shares her visionary plan to catapult Akutee's growth three to five times beyond its recent triumphs exclusively with IMAGES Business of Fashion...

Sanya Arora

In the bustling world of fashion, where trends flicker like shooting stars, there emerges a brand that stands as a beacon of timeless elegance and cultural homage. Akutee, an ethnic wear brand founded by Bollywood actor Sagarika Ghatge and her mother, Urmila, is more than just a collection of garments; it's a narrative woven with threads of tradition, artistry, and the rich tapestry of the Ghatge dynasty's history.

In an exclusive interview with IMAGES Business of Fashion's Sanya Arora, Sagarika shares insights into the brand's inception, the royal influence that shaped its aesthetics, and the delicate balance of tradition and modernity.

Can you share the story behind the inception of Akutee? What inspired you and your mother, Urmila, to start this ethnic wear brand?

Akutee is an ode to rich textiles, detailing, and hand-painted garments that take you back in time to an era of artistic talent and impeccable taste. Growing up surrounded by elegant women draped in Chanderis, chiffons, tissues, and brocades, I was in awe of their poise and grace.

My mother Urmila was my biggest influence. A strong, independent and passionate woman who took up art at the age of 16 and has been painting ever since. Fond of nature, her hand-painted floral patterns made way onto the garments she wore which soon became her signature style. She has now trained and mentored a collective of young artists to paint in her signature style and bring our brand Akutee to life.

Tell us about your dynasty's story.

Beyond the stitches and fabrics lies the rich tapestry of the Ghatge dynasty's history. Tracing back centuries, the Ghatges have woven their legacy with threads of resilience, military prowess, and diplomatic acumen.





NAVIGATING THE THREADS OF TRADITION:

How Nappa Dori has evolved into a sustainability-led luxury brand

Nappa Dori has come a long way from its humble beginnings in Hauz Khas Village in Delhi. Today, the brand is present in Dubai, India, and London, and its helm is Creative Director, Gautam Sinha...

Sanya Arora

In the ever-evolving tapestry of the fashion and design world, where trends ebb and flow like the tides, one brand stands as a steadfast beacon of timeless elegance and craftsmanship — Nappa Dori. This is not merely a brand; it's a journey through the intricacies of design, a celebration of culture, and a testament to the artistry that weaves together tradition and modernity. Nappa Dori's story unfolds as a rich tapestry, interwoven with the vibrant threads of Indian sensibilities and global aspirations.

The quiet luxury brand which paints a vivid picture of nostalgia, mysticism, and romance, has come a long way from its humble beginning in Hauz Khas Village in Delhi. Today, the brand is present in over 20 countries, and its helm is Creative Director, Gautam Sinha.

Sinha's design philosophy is a harmonious blend of his Indian heritage and contemporary interpretations that resonate on a global scale. However, his journey is not just about building a brand; it's about creating a legacy. Inspired by minimalism, detail-oriented craftsmanship, and a love for leather, Gautam Sinha's creative process has propelled Nappa Dori into the limelight. His roots in fashion accessory design for renowned high-street brands paved the way for a love affair with leather—a love that birthed the brand.



JQR SPORTS

STEPS AHEAD OF THE CURVE WITH INNOVATIVE DESIGNS

Specializing in sports shoes, sneakers, and casual footwear, JQR Sports has woven a tale of quality, style, and performance that resonates with everyday individuals and fitness enthusiasts across various sports disciplines.

Sanya Arora

In the dynamic landscape of Indian footwear, where trends rise and fall like fashion tides, JQR Sports stands tall as a beacon of innovation and style. Here's delving into the narrative of JQR Sports, a leading Indian footwear manufacturing company, through an engaging conversation between IMAGES Business of Fashion's Sanya Arora and JQR Sports.

Picture this – a bustling world of sports enthusiasts, casual fashion lovers, and fitness aficionados. Now, add the vibrancy of JQR Sports, a powerhouse in Indian footwear since its establishment in 2014. Specializing in sports shoes, sneakers, and casual footwear, JQR Sports has woven a tale of quality, style, and performance that resonates with everyday individuals and fitness enthusiasts across various sports disciplines.



ORRA on Expansion Spree, To Open 24 Stores Next Year: Dipu Mehta, Managing Director

In a gold dominated market, ORRA wanted to build a 'diamond' centric consumer business at a 'national' level, and it succeeded in doing so with its rich Belgian heritage and commitment to exceptional craftsmanship...

Surabhi Khosla

From sculpting and manufacturing diamonds to crafting and retailing the finest diamond and gold jewellery, ORRA has come a long way since its inception as a family jewellery brand. ORRA has leveraged its rich heritage and has risen to become one of the most-trusted diamond brands in the country.

ORRA has consistently set the benchmark for design leadership and product innovation. In a gold dominated market, the company had very high aspirations and wanted to build a 'diamond' centric consumer business at a 'national' level, and it succeeded in doing so with its rich Belgian heritage and commitment to exceptional craftsmanship. A symbol of timeless elegance and style, the brand's collections are mostly designed keeping consumer demands in mind and the traditional patterns that ORRA has been using for the past 130 years.

Today, the brand is spread across 38 cities, in 88 stores. It also prides itself on consistently being at the forefront of design leadership and product innovation with numerous global design centres. Over the years, ORRA has conducted an in-depth study of international markets to map a journey of both diamond consumption as well as brands in this space. It has also invested heavily in people, technology, e-commerce and a robust supply chain to emerge a winner in the post-pandemic retail space.

In a freewheeling chat with *Editor IMAGES Business of Fashion*, Surabhi Khosla, Dipu Mehta, Managing Director, ORRA Fine Jewellery India, talks about the brand's design philosophy, its product and technology innovations, future plans and much more.

How do you strike a balance between traditional and contemporary elements in your jewellery designs?

Balancing traditional and contemporary elements in our jewellery designs is a core principle at ORRA. We aim to create jewellery that not only complements traditional wedding ensembles, but also suits modern



“ Over the years, ORRA has invested heavily in people, technology, e-commerce and a robust supply chain to emerge a winner in the post-pandemic retail space in the country, setting a benchmark for design leadership and product innovation ”