

Summit
CREATING VISION FOR MODERN RETAIL IN INDIA

20-23 FEBRUARY, 2023
THE MALLS IN MUMBAI, POWAI LAKE



REDEFINING RETAIL STRATEGY KEEPING \$2 TRILLION INDUSTRY IN MIND





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- Chatbots



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- AR/VR immersive experiences
- Virtual dressing rooms
- Smart shelves
- Interactive signage
- Personalized loyalty experiences and offers



Purchase (online or in store)

- Kiosks
- Self-checkout
- In-store robots
- Personalized loyalty experiences and offers



Pickup/ delivery (home or in store)

- Curbside pickup
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RETAIL GROWTH CONTINUES TO EVOLVE; THIS IS JUST THE START



Consumers across the world have realised the convenience and advantage of omnichannel shopping. The shopping channel is chosen based on various factors including convenience, trust, experience, and price.

We have been witnessing a paradigm shift in the way India buys. Indian shoppers now give equal emphasis to brick-and-mortar and digital commerce-led retail. Store experiences have become a critical part of the retail journey, and this can be seen in stores across malls or in domestic and international airports.

Today, QR codes promoting a product, irrespective of industry, are a part of printed newspaper and magazine ads; marketers are using tools like Open AI to rethink their strategies. We think it is fascinating, but this is just the beginning.

Open Network for Digital commerce (ONDC) is a key part of India's retail innovation. ONDC promises a democratic market creation for Digital commerce. With PhonePe launching Pincode to integrate into the network, there will be a greater focus on hyperlocal commerce – something that India needs, given the need to democratise e-commerce in the country.

I hope that you will all find our new magazine informative and helpful in achieving our company's goals.

Kumar Rajagopalan,
Chief Executive Officer, RAI

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NOW, GOLD HAS ITS OWN 'AADHAAR NUMBER'

From April 1, 2023, the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) will forbid the sale of gold jewellery or artefacts that lack a six-digit alphanumeric hallmark unique identification number (HUID). The government's announcement on Saturday aims to safeguard consumers and boost their trust when purchasing hallmarked gold jewellery. According to official sources, this measure will guarantee traceability and ensure the quality of gold jewellery.

The Hallmark Unique Identification (HUID) number is a combination of six letters and numbers used for identification purposes. It's worth noting that since June 23, 2021, the BIS has successfully enforced Mandatory Hallmarking in 256 districts across the country, with over 300,000 gold articles being stamped with HUID on a daily basis.

To authenticate hallmarked gold jewellery items with HUID numbers, consumers can use the "verify HUID" feature within the 'BIS CARE' app. The app



offers data on the jeweller who had the article hallmarked, their registration number, the article's purity, type, and the hallmarking centre that tested and stamped the article. By utilising this information, a consumer can compare the article type and purity to verify the purchased product. 😊

GATI LAUNCHES HIGH-TECH SURFACE TRANSHIPMENT CENTRE AND DISTRIBUTION WAREHOUSE

Gati Ltd., an Allcargo Group company and leading Indian express logistics and supply chain solutions provider, has unveiled a state-of-the-art, tech-enabled surface transshipment centre and distribution warehouse (STCDW) in Bhiwandi, on Mumbai's outskirts. The 1.48 lakh sq. ft. facility features advanced technologies, a skilled workforce, and Grade A warehousing, providing customers with express cargo distribution operations, supply chain visibility, reduced dwell time, and time-definite deliveries. The eco-friendly, AI-powered facility will also have a solar power generation capacity of 150



KW. The Mumbai STCDW is part of Gati's plan to establish 12 modern, automated, and environmentally friendly STCs across India to strengthen its supply chain and warehousing competencies. 😊

GROWEL'S 101 MALL CELEBRATES WOMEN AND THEIR TALENTS



Growel's 101 Mall in Mumbai's Kandivali recently hosted the 9th edition of ArtiSTREE 2023, an annual event aimed at celebrating and honoring women from all walks of life by providing them with a platform to showcase their talents. '

The event saw over 100 entries across various categories, including arts and crafts, culinary arts, and performance arts. Participants were shortlisted through three days of auditions in March 2023, and finalists were provided with a public platform through an exhibition of arts and culinary.

Speaking about the initiative, Gerald Mathew, General Manager of Growel's 101 Mall, said, "ArtiSTREE is a festival to celebrate womanhood. It is like a movement that was started nine years ago to provide an open platform to women, largely homemakers, to encourage their talent." He also highlighted the overwhelming response from women to participate in ArtiSTREE year after year and showcase their talents to all mall visitors.

In addition to the competition, Growel's 101 Mall also organized workshops by women experts for their women customers as part of ArtiSTREE 2023. These workshops included self-love by Nita Sundararaju, Tarot/Numerology by Neetu Kumar, recipes using Millet by Anupama Padhi, and art by Namrata Agarwal. 😊

SHOPPERS STOP LAUNCHES 'U R YOU', AN INCLUSIVE FASHION BRAND FOR PLUS-SIZED CUSTOMERS

Shoppers Stop has introduced 'U R You', an exclusive fashion brand catering to plus-sized men and women. The launch aims to bolster their Private Brands, a crucial strategic component for growth.

Venu Nair, Customer Care Associate MD and CEO at Shoppers Stop Ltd, commented on the launch, saying, "U R You aligns with our goal of inspiring customers to look good and feel confident by meeting their lifestyle choices. There are limited brands offering trendy fashion for larger sizes. U R You is set to fill this gap with a stylish, affordable fashion collection." 😊

COLUMBIA SPORTSWEAR OPENS FIFTH STORE IN MUMBAI

Columbia Sportswear has opened its fifth store in Mumbai on Linking Road, Santacruz (W). The store provides a premium feel that resonates with top brands in Linking Road and offers top-of-the-line outdoor adventure gear for both novice and intermediate adventurers. The store aims to cater to the growing outdoor culture in and around Mumbai and become the top outdoor brand in India. According to Mr. Ankur Bhatia, CEO of Chogori India Retail Limited, the company that retails Columbia Sportswear and other international brands in India, the new store allows them to reach out to adventure enthusiasts who value quality and choose technologically advanced outdoor adventure gear for a safe and enjoyable experience in the outdoors. 😊

SWISS-BASED PACKAGING FIRM SIG TO BUILD FIRST ASEPTIC CARTON PLANT IN AHMEDABAD



Swiss-based packaging company SIG will construct its first aseptic carton plant in Ahmedabad, the company said in a release.

The investment will cover state-of-the-art production capacity, for the printing and finishing of aseptic carton packs with high environmental standards. Construction will commence in Q1 2023, and the start of the commercial production is expected towards the end of 2024. Phase one of construction is expected to create around 300 jobs.

SIG will invest approximately €60 million over the period 2023-2025, to reach production capacity of up to 4 billion packs per annum. Subsequent investments could increase capacity up to 10 billion packs per annum. Land and buildings will be financed through a long-term lease with an NPV of approximately €30 million.

Angela Lu, President & General Manager Asia-Pacific South at SIG, said: "India is fast becoming the world's most populous country and has a very low per capita consumption of entry level packaged food

and beverage goods. Since entering the market five years ago we have grown exponentially. We are looking forward to further expanding our presence and driving our market share. An established local infrastructure, will allow us to fast-track innovations and build strong and long-lasting partnerships with our customers."

Vandana Tandan, Head of Markets for India and Bangladesh at SIG, said: "We are thrilled to announce that soon we will have locally produced Made in India aseptic carton packs. With this plant we will be able to further develop the range of products available to Indian consumers. Our long shelf-life packaging increases access to vital nutrition and avoids food waste through an array of sizes to suit all consumption occasions at affordable price points."

SIG entered the Indian market in 2018 and has seen a rapid expansion of its business. The plant will supply its growing filler base, which now serves all leading dairy and non-carbonated soft drink players. 😊



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SUPREME COURT ACCEPTS RAI'S INTERVENTION APPLICATION OVER PLASTIC BAGS

In a recent development, the consumer disputes redressal commission (Consumer Forum) in various states across India have passed orders against charging customers for carry bags. Retailers had claimed that they charged for carry bags only after seeking the consent of the customers and putting up proper communication, signboards, and advertisements mentioning the charges at the stores. However, the consumer court in various states have ruled that charging for a carry bag is unethical and asked retailers to pay compensation to customers.

Despite some retailers challenging the state consumer forum orders before the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission

(NCDRC), the commission has also dismissed the case. One of the major retailers, Reliance Retail Limited, has further challenged the NCDRC order before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India.

In this context, Retailers Association of India (RAI) filed an application before the Hon'ble Supreme Court for charging carry bags on behalf of retailers. The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India has accepted RAI's intervention application.

The ban on charging customers for carry bags has been welcomed by consumer rights activists across the country. They have hailed the orders as a victory for the consumers and called upon retailers to act in a more responsible and ethical

manner.

RAI has also stated that they will work towards creating awareness among their members about the court's orders and help them comply with the new rules. The association has also urged retailers to put up signboards at their stores, informing customers that carry bags will be provided free of cost.

The Hon'ble Supreme Court's decision is expected to have a far-reaching impact on the retail industry, and retailers are likely to comply with the court's orders in the future. It is hoped that such measures will help promote ethical business practices and enhance consumer confidence in the retail industry. 😊

FOOD SAFETY AND STANDARDS REGULATIONS WORKSHOP ORGANISED IN HYDERABAD

On March 15, 2023, a workshop was held in Hyderabad with the participation of approximately 25 delegates. The attendees provided the Retailers Association of India (RAI) with excellent feedback about the workshop. 😊



JAN VISHWAS BILL INTRODUCED IN PARLIAMENT TO DECRIMINALISE CERTAIN ACTS

On December 22, 2022, the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill 2022 was introduced in the Indian Parliament. This bill seeks to decriminalise certain Acts, such as the Legal Metrology Act and the Food Safety Act, which will be a landmark reform for the operation of retail businesses in India. The bill is available for public viewing, and interested parties can refer to page 105 for details.

Retailers Association of India (RAI) has been pursuing the government to ease the legal provisions surrounding the retail business, and it has welcomed this develop-

ment. The Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India, has accepted RAI's recommendation to amend the Legal Metrology (General) Rules, 2011, regarding the decriminalisation of the Legal Metrology Act.

RAI has had a series of meetings with the Department of Consumer Affairs to push for this amendment. RAI has also thanked the department for considering its request.

This move is expected to be beneficial for the retail industry, and it will help ease the burden on retailers. The Legal Metrology Act deals with the measurement of products

sold in the market, and the decriminalisation of this Act will help ease the compliance requirements for retailers. Similarly, the decriminalisation of the Food Safety Act will also help simplify the compliance process for retailers.

The Jan Vishwas Bill is a significant development for the retail industry, and it is expected to have a positive impact on the ease of doing business in India. The Retailers Association of India has welcomed this development and will continue to work towards creating a more conducive environment for the retail business in India. 🧐

RESTAURANTS EXEMPTED FROM BAN ON NON-VEG FOOD AFTER RAI APPEAL

Retailers Association of India (RAI) secured an exemption for restaurants from the non-vegetarian ban within a 10-kilometer radius of Air Force Station Yelahanka from January 30, 2023, to February 20, 2023, due to the Aero India-2023 event.

RAI had submitted a representation to the authorities to exempt restaurants from the ban, and they have now accepted RAI's recommendation provided that restau-

rants agree to proper disposal of meat waste without dumping it in the open.

The ban on non-vegetarian dishes had caused concern among restaurant owners in the area, as they feared a loss of business during the Aero India-2023 event. RAI had submitted a representation to the authorities, highlighting the impact of the ban on the restaurant industry and requesting an exemption for restaurants.



This move has been welcomed by restaurant owners, who had been worried about the impact of the ban on their business. They have expressed their gratitude to the RAI for their efforts in securing the exemption for restaurants. 🧐

RAI PARTICIPATES IN MEETINGS WITH BIS OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS QCOS FOR FOOTWEAR

Retailers Association of India (RAI) participated in two meetings with officials from the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) to discuss quality control orders (QCOs) for footwear. The first meeting, chaired by Mr Rajeev Thakur, AS, DPIIT and Mr Pramod Kumar Tiwari - DG, BIS and Mr HJS Pasricha - Deputy DG, BIS, was held on March 2, 2023, at the BIS headquarters. The second meeting, chaired by Shri Ajay Kumar Lal - Scientist, BIS, was held on March 21, 2023, and was attended by a delegation of 30 footwear retailers representing international brands.

During the meetings, the following points were discussed:

- ◆ Testing should initially be based on self-certification, and a road-map should be created to establish labs and spread awareness in the industry.
- ◆ Existing inventory/goods produced before June 30, 2023, should not fall under the purview of BIS, as every shoe has a hand tag that clearly states the month and year of manufacture.
- ◆ No standards have been published yet for children's shoes and clogs, but these categories will be discussed subsequently.
- ◆ International brands, especially



sports footwear brands that follow EU or American standards, should be allowed to import based on self-declaration.

- ◆ The authorities expressed apprehension about marking on the shoe box, and a solution needs to be found.
- ◆ For the first year, there will be no inspector raj, and the process will be close to self-certification.
- ◆ For domestic manufacturers with units in India, licenses will be given quickly after a factory visit, and renewal is automatic subject to timely payment of renewal fees.

- ◆ The meetings were attended by representatives from Kothari Industrial Corporation Ltd, Puma, Adidas, Skechers, Trent, Reliance, Bata, Nike, H&M, Decathlon, and the RAI team.

RAI has already represented to DPIIT the issue of existing inventory/goods produced before June 30, 2023, not falling under the purview of BIS.

Overall, the meetings were productive, and the BIS officials were open to suggestions and feedback from the industry. The RAI will continue to work towards creating a more conducive environment for the footwear industry in India. 😊



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RETAIL MSME AWARENESS PROGRAMME ORGANISED IN MUMBAI.

The Retailers Association of India (RAI) is pleased to announce the successful implementation of the MSME Empowerment Programme directed by the National Council of Retailers Association of India and executed by RAI.

The first programme was conducted on March 27, 2023, in Andheri, Vile Parle, and Juhu with the support of the Retailers Food Dealer Welfare Association – Andheri Chapter. The programme was a great success, with 95 small and micro retailers in attendance who were eager to learn and improve their businesses.

The programme focused on providing retailers with the necessary skills and knowledge to enhance their operations and increase their



revenue. The participants received insights and guidance on various topics, including supply chain management, inventory management, customer experience, and marketing strategies.

The RAI team was thrilled with the positive response from the par-

ticipants, and the MSME Empowerment Programme is expected to benefit many more retailers in the future. The RAI is committed to supporting the growth and development of small and micro retailers in India and will continue to execute such programmes in the future. 😊

RAI MEETS MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS ON GOLD JEWELLERY HALLMARKING IMPLEMENTATION

The Retailers Association of India (RAI) was invited by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs - Government of India for a meeting on the implementation of hallmarking of gold jewellery in India. The meeting was chaired by Honourable Secretary - Shri Rohit Kumar Singh, Honourable Additional Secretary - Nidhi Khare, and Honourable DG:

BIS - Pramod Kumar Tiwari.

RAI had submitted a representation to the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, requesting a six-month extension of mandatory hallmarking of gold jewellery or gold artifacts post-March 31, 2023. The Honourable Secretary patiently heard the RAI's views and assured that the

Ministry will soon take a decision to ensure that stakeholders won't face any issues in implementing the said amendment.

Overall, the meeting was productive, and the RAI is optimistic that a positive outcome will be reached regarding the implementation of gold jewellery hallmarking in India. 😊



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SOMS, IGNOU AND RAI HOST JOB FAIR FOR BBA STUDENTS

On February 14 and 15, 2023, the School of Management Studies (SOMS) at Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), in collaboration with the Retailers Association of India (RAI), organized an internship and job fair for BBA in Retailing students at the SOMS campus in New Delhi. The two-day event attracted approximately 500 students and 15 prominent brands from the retail sector, offering internship and job opportunities to these future retail professionals.

The internship/job fair aimed to provide a platform for BBA in Retailing students to explore career opportunities, network with potential employers, and gain insight into the retail industry's expectations and requirements. The participating companies were able to assess the talent pool, offering internships and jobs to the most promising candidates.



Both students and employers benefited from this event, which underscored the importance of the BBA in Retailing program as an avenue for preparing students for successful careers in the dynamic and fast-growing retail sector. 😊

FOOD SAFETY STANDARD AUTHORITY OF INDIA MANDATES TRAINING & CERTIFICATION FOR INDIAN FOOD RETAILERS

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has made Food Safety Training & Certification (FoSTaC) mandatory for all food retailers in the country. According to the FSSAI notification, food business operators with Central or State Licenses must have at least one trained and certified Food Safety Supervisor for every 25 food handlers or part thereof on all their premises.

FoSTaC is a comprehensive training program designed for food businesses across the value chain, ensuring compliance with food safety practices. Upon successful completion of the program, participants will receive a certificate from FSSAI.

Following the pandemic, FoSTaC has resumed offline sessions. Between January and March, 12 ses-



sions were conducted in the Retail and Distribution category and one session in the Storage and Transportation category across India, with approximately 390 participants attending these sessions.

The mandatory FoSTaC training underscores the importance of food safety and compliance in the Indian food retail industry, helping to maintain high standards and protect consumer health. 😊

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RAI'S EXCELLENCE IN STORE OPERATIONS WORKSHOPS ACHIEVE MASSIVE SUCCESS IN MUMBAI AND BENGALURU

The Retailers Association of India (RAI) recently conducted its signature workshop, Excellence in Store Operations (ESOps), in Mumbai and Bengaluru on February 15th and 16th, 2023. The event saw participation from 62 employees representing more than 15 organizations and received excellent feedback from all attendees.

The workshop aimed to optimize retail operations by focusing on four key areas: Managing profitability, In-store visual merchandising, Local Store Marketing & Catchment Area Analysis, and Understanding Buying and Merchandising & Inventory Management. Participants hailed from various organizations, including Four Aces Fashion House, Intercraft Trading, Just Dog, Metro Brands, and Reliance Retail, among other names in the industry.

Industry experts facilitated the sessions, including Vivek Thilakan, Archana Radhakrishnan, Dhimant Bakshi, Shraddha Kurup, Sathish Bhat, Surender Gnanaolivu, and Yogesh Kakar. Participants praised the workshop for its informative and innovative content and the takeaways they got.

Mudashar Pasha, Store Manager at Reliance Re-



tail Ltd., said, "Sessions were very informative and innovative, and it was fun to know and learn so many things. I would thank RAI for this wonderful workshop." Amar Kapasi, Founder Partner at Shubhamay, noted, "It was a very educative workshop, and the relatability factor in real-world scenarios was very well addressed. I had a great experience overall." Rakesh Kanojia, Cluster Manager at Pepe Jeans India, added, "The workshop was very nice, and I learned a lot. I will implement this in my store to increase profits and growth."

The success of the ESops workshop in Mumbai and Bengaluru highlights RAI's commitment to promoting excellence and best practices within the retail industry. 😊

THREE-MONTH INTERNSHIP NOW PART OF RAI-IGNOU BBA PROGRAMME; STUDENTS WILL NOW GET LIVE EXPOSURE

Students pursuing the Bachelors in Business Administration (Retailing) programme developed by Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and Retailers Association of India (RAI) must complete a minimum three-month internship, allowing them to delve into the intricacies of the retail sector and apply their academic knowledge to real-world situations.

RAI and IGNOU had jointly developed a first-of-its-kind, three-year Bachelors in Business Administration (Retailing) program, offered through distance learning. This innovative curriculum aims to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the retail industry by combining theoretical concepts with practical experience. 😊



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2023 GIA GLOBAL HONOUREES FOR RETAIL EXCELLENCE ANNOUNCED

The Inspired Home Show and the International Housewares Association (IHA), the global sponsors and organizers of the IHA Global Innovation Awards (gia) programme, recently announced the 2023 gia Global Honorees for Retail Excellence. The Global Honorees are:

- ◆ Argentina – Tiendas Landmark
- ◆ Colombia – Ambiente Living

- ◆ Norway – Illums Bolighus
- ◆ Uruguay – La Iberica
- ◆ USA – A. Dodson’s

The global gia jury, consisting of three retail/visual merchandising experts and seven editors and publishers of co-sponsoring housewares trade publications from around the world, selected the gia Global Honorees from the winners previously chosen in their respective countries

by the national gia sponsors. In addition, the Martin M. Pegler Award for Excellence in Visual Merchandising was awarded to Tiendas Landmark of Argentina, and the gia Digital Commerce Award for Excellence in Online Retailing was awarded to Illums Bolighus of Norway.

In addition to the 2023 Global Honorees, the 2022 gia Top Window award winners were honored at the gia awards dinner that took place at



› **Tiendas Landmark, Argentina**

Radisson Blu in Chicago.

The gia program was created by IHA and The Inspired Home Show to foster innovation and excellence in home and housewares retailing throughout the world. Since the launch of gia in 2000, there have been more than 500 gia retail award winners, from over 50 countries on six continents.

The competition is structured on a two-tier level, national and global, evaluating retailers within the following categories:

- ◆ Overall mission statement, vision and strategy
- ◆ Store design and layout
- ◆ Visual merchandising, displays



› **Ambiente Living, Colombia**

- ◆ and window displays
- ◆ Marketing, advertising and promotions
- ◆ Customer service and staff training

- ◆ Innovation
 - ◆ Co-sponsoring the country-specific gia award programs with IHA
 - ◆ are housewares trade publications worldwide, which sponsor nation-



› Illums Bolighus, Norway

14 COMPANIES HONOURED WITH IHA GLOBAL INNOVATION AWARDS

Meanwhile, 14 housewares suppliers ranging from well-established brands to first-time exhibitors were honoured as Global Honorees of the IHA Global Innovation Awards (gia) for Excellence in Product Design.

The Global Honorees in each of 14 categories were announced during the invitation-only gia dinner on the first evening of The Inspired Home Show 2023 (March 7) at McCormick Place in Chicago.

“Congratulations to these Global Honorees of the 2023 IHA Global Innovation Awards for Excellence in Product Design; they represent the cutting-edge innovation and creativity that is driving the housewares industry today,” said Derek Miller, IHA president & CEO. “Prod-

uct innovation is the engine that keeps the home + housewares industry vibrant and profitable. It is our pleasure to honor the brands and designers that continue to push the envelope and delight both buy-

al gia programs in their respective countries. This year, 27 national gia winners from 26 countries were selected by the co-sponsoring trade publications with targeted distribution in over 50 countries on five continents. All winners were automatically entered in the global competition for The Inspired Home Show in Chicago.

The gia winners of 2022-2023 are recognized and prominently featured at The Inspired Home Show. A festive gia awards dinner was held at the Radisson Blu Aqua Hotel. In addition, introducing the national gia winners to visitors and exhibitors of The Inspired Home Show, there is a special gia display in the walkway connecting the Lakeside Center to the Grand Concourse.



› La Iberica, Uruguay

WINNERS OF THE IHA GLOBAL INNOVATION AWARDS

Bath + Personal Care: *Stasher, Everyday Beauty Bag*

Cleaning: *simplehuman, paper towel pump*

Cook + Bakeware: *Gourmet Kitchen Works LLC, Genetti Fan Lid*

Home Décor + Gifts: *Wrap-It Storage, MagSnap – Magnetic Snap Wristband*

Home Organization + Storage: *Grand Fusion Housewares, Inc., Roll-Up Drying Rack with Collapsing Utensil Holder*

Household + Home Electrics: *Roborock (HK) Limited, S8 Pro Ultra*

Kitchen Electrics: *Ooni Limited, Ooni Volt 12*

Kitchen Hand Tools + Cutlery: *Dreamfarm, Sharple*

Kitchenware: *Dreamfarm, Fluicer*

Luggage, Travel Goods & Accessories: *Sherpani, Soleil AT*

Pet Products: *Dexas International, Ltd., Snack & Distract Licking Mat*

Smart Home: *Chefman, CHEF iQ Smart Thermometer™*

Sustainable Products: *LARQ, Inc., LARQ Bottle Filtered*

Tabletop: *Sempli, Monti-Mini Decanter + Monti-Rosso*



› [A. Dodson's, USA](#)

ers and consumers.”

The 70 finalists in all categories are featured in the New Product Showcases in the Buyers Club in each Show building and the 14 category Global Honorees are on display in the Hall of Product Innovation in the Grand Concourse Lobby in the North Building.

The Inspired Home Show, IHA's global home + housewares marketplace, is being held March 4-7 at Chicago's McCormick Place Complex and features exhibitors and buyer attendees from around the globe. 🌍

IHA 2023: HOME (SHOW) IS WHERE THE HEART IS



The Inspired Home Show 2023 wrapped on March 7, 2023 at McCormick Place in Chicago after four highly productive days. After an initial return in 2022, the Show demonstrated significant year-over-year increases in both exhibitor and retailer participation. More than 1,600 exhibitors and nearly 30,000 home and house-

wares professionals from 125 countries came together to discover new products, reconnect with colleagues and advance the industry.

“The 2023 Show was an incredible step forward in the post-pandemic recovery of face-to-face events for the home + housewares industry,” said Derek Miller, President and CEO of the International Housewares

Association. “The enthusiasm and positive feedback we have seen over the last four days reminds us all how important it is to gather the industry together in-person every year. It was particularly rewarding to see the return of so many who were unable to participate last year.”

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try, through the presence of major key retailers and leading exhibiting brands. Attendees confirmed at the show included senior-level executives, DMMs, GMMs and buyers from major retailers around the world .

The Show featured multiple new and returning attractions, including:

- ◆ Addition of the Travel Gear + Luggage category, created in partnership with the Travel Goods Association.
- ◆ The pre-Show New Exhibitor Preview and Trending Today, which featured brands and products new to the Show and that support at-home entertaining.
- ◆ The 2024 Global Innovation Awards, honoring excellence in home + housewares retailing, product design and student achievement.
- ◆ Four keynotes focused on the future of home + housewares trends in consumer and retail evolution, including one by Walmart's Head of Home Goods and General Manager of Home Marketplace.
- ◆ Innovation Theater sessions featuring industry experts such as Joe Derochowski of Circana (formerly The NPD Group); Anita Desai, TikTok's Head of Home and Living; and leaders from Newell Brands discussing their consumer occasions-based marketing strategy.
- ◆ The return of the Housewares Cares Charity Gala, benefitting the Breast Cancer Research Foundation, the James Beard Foundation, Winning with Wyatt and the V Foundation.

The Inspired Home Show 2024 will take place March 16-19 at McCormick Place in Chicago. Registration is currently open at <https://app.theinspiredhomeshow.com/registration/>. 🧐

DOUBLE THE EXCELLENCE, AS ARGENTINA'S LANDMARK STORES BAGS TWO GIA AWARDS

Elena Scelzi, the Visual Manager of Landmark Stores, an Argentina-based furniture store talks to RAI Marketing Director and Editorial Director STOrai Dr Hitesh Bhatt on her company winning two awards at the recently concluded gia Awards at the Inspired Home Show 2023, the secret to her company's success, and the road ahead

The team at Argentina-based houseware brand Tiendas Landmark have a reason to celebrate. They recently won two awards at the recently-concluded gia Awards at the Inspired Home Show organised by the International Housewares Association in Chicago.

Not too many companies have won two awards at the show, which has participants from all over the world. Yet, Tiendas Landmark managed to achieve what many have said is a huge step for the retail. They won the prestigious Martin M. Pegler Award for Excellence in Visual Merchandising for their Landmark Store, as well as the Excellence in Retail Innovation Award.

While speaking to STOrai, Elena Scelzi, the Visual Manager of Tiendas Landmark said, "One of the members of the jury that gave us the



award said that Martin Pegler would have been proud of us. That, I feel, is the hallmark of the work we had done to achieve this."

But what did Landmark Stores do differently? "We ensured that the standards we had when it came to the store and our products were top-level. Secondly, the team is hard

working and have a wonderful approach and attention to detail when it comes to store and product," said Elena.

REDEFINING STORE EXPERIENCE

Only recently, Tiendas Landmark introduced a department store exclusively catering to the lifestyle

segment. The store offers an exquisite collection of designer furniture at Landmark, unique decorative objects inspired by different parts of the world, premium quality kitchenware and tableware for an enhanced culinary experience, well-crafted lighting solutions for every space, and cosy rugs to add comfort and warmth.

The aim of this area is to provide a one-stop-shop for visitors seeking to create, renovate, or add a personal touch to their homes. Spanning over 6000 square meters, this store offers a diverse range of creative solutions that cater to different styles and preferences - from Scandinavian, Moroccan, Oriental, French, English and more. Visitors can browse through pre-arranged settings that provide a fresh per-

spective on everyday living spaces and objects. By bringing together all the essential elements in one location, shopping for home decor has never been more convenient.

Landmark Stores has presented a novel approach that combines an extensive range of designs and trends with a commitment to cutting-edge concepts and inspiration, aimed at enhancing the style and functionality of your home. This distinctive approach allows for the creation of exclusive and unparalleled living spaces. Beyond a conventional shopping experience, Landmark Stores provides an immersive journey of exploration and discovery.

“Landmark stands for high-quality products and a high-end store experience. We try and give a theatrical experience to our customers. This

comes from my background in set and costume design that I brought from the film industry into the retail. As a result, we change the store layout every month, and refresh the store every quarter, keeping in mind worldwide tendance,” added Elena.

EXCELLENCE IN RETAIL INNOVATION

Besides the Martin M. Pegler Award for Excellence in Visual Merchandising, Landmark Stores also won the Excellence in Retail Innovation Awards at the ceremony – giving them the rare distinction of being a store that has won two awards at the Inspired Home Show on the same night.

When asked what they did differently to win this award, Elena said, “Before the pandemic, we focused on 80 per cent import and 20 per cent produced by the company. However, during the pandemic, we built a factory and focused on homegrown products. Today, all our products that are displayed in the store are made in the factory. The biggest advantage is it caters to the Argentine taste.”

ROAD AHEAD

Landmark Stores is clear that they want to expand their base from the nine physical stores they currently have (not to mention the e-commerce segment). “We have plans to spread our wings to the rest of Latin America and Mexico by the end of the year,” concludes Elena. 🌱





THE POWER OF SHARED EXPERIENCES: PICNIC TIME FAMILY OF BRANDS' MANTRA

Dr Hitesh Bhatt, Marketing Director, RAI, and Editorial Director STOrai Magazine recently sat with Danny Corbucci, the Managing Partner at Picnic Time Family of Brands to understand the 40-year-old company's secret to success. Here's what he discovered...

Once upon a time, two Italian immigrants with a shared love for picnics embarked on a journey to bring families together, create lasting memories, and realize the American dream. Today, the story of Picnic Time Family of Brands has evolved into a heart-warming tale of perseverance, passion, and a deep-rooted belief in the power of shared experiences.



Gustavo Cosaro and Mario Tagliati's vision came to life in 1975 when they opened "Two Gentlemen from Verona" in Woodland Hills, California. This unique shop provided customers with a delightful combination of fine wine, quality cheese, and friendly service. As their offerings expanded, the duo noticed a recurring request from customers: a picnic basket to complement the perfect picnic experience.

THE BIRTH OF PICNIC TIME

With no suitable picnic baskets available in the market, Gustavo and Mario took it upon themselves to fill the void. They imported empty, hand-woven baskets, enlisted family members to sew napkins and tablecloths, and thus, Picnic Time was born.

Initially, sales were local, but their innovative products quickly

gained popularity through trade shows and word of mouth. Eventually, the duo closed their wine and cheese shop and moved into a warehouse in Moorpark, California, focusing solely on their burgeoning picnic business.

THE PICNIC TIME FAMILY OF BRANDS

With the aim to make picnicking accessible to everyone, Picnic

Time's simple mission evolved into a diverse range of products. Today, the Picnic Time Family of Brands encompasses four distinct brands, each designed to bring people together and enhance leisure time experiences.

Though the company has grown exponentially, its core values remain unchanged. Every team member is committed to customer satisfaction, and they continue to earn their customers' loyalty every day. Danny Corbucci, the Managing Partner at Picnic Time Family of Brands says the main aim of the brand is to bring together families and ensure everlasting memories. "We started off as a picnic-first company i.e. only with picnic basket, but over time we expanded. Today, Picnic Time Family of Brands has four brands i.e. the flagship Picnic Time that focuses on picnic products such as baskets; Toscana focuses on serving trays, cheese boards, and gift sets; Legacy focuses on wine and beer accesso-



ries; and Oniva is for outdoor gear products.

"Today, the headquarters are in Los Angeles, California where we also have five home-owned warehouses. We outsource some manufacture to China, India, and Mexico, and our products are distributed in USA, Canada and Latin America," explains Danny.

SECRET TO SUCCESS

Danny points out that two critical factors enabled them to expand their business. "We listened to two sets of people: our employees and our customers. We encourage our employees to constantly share ideas, so we can improve. When it comes to customers, we know that feedback is critical, as they are the people buying our products," he adds.

Thanks to this feedback, Picnic Company Family of Brands has licensing tie-ups with Disney Group, the National Football League, Warner Brothers (Harry Potter merchandise), and Coca Cola amongst oth-



► **Danny Corbucci, Managing Partner, Picnic Time Family of Brands**

ers. But the company has plans to expand further. "While a bulk of our sales is in e-commerce, we are also seen in mom & pop stores. However, we want to move to bigger retailers such as Costco and Walmart," says Danny.

Nearly 40 years since its inception, Picnic Time's story remains a testament to the power of the American dream. From a small storefront to a thriving family of brands, the company's journey is a perfect example of hard work, determination, and passion.

As the Picnic Time Family of Brands continues to flourish, its mission remains unshaken: to bring happiness and create lasting memories through shared experiences. With every picnic, families can cherish the moments spent together, knowing that the legacy of Gustavo and Mario lives on, one basket at a time. 😊

RETAIL 2.0: INDIA LEADS THE WAY IN GROWTH

The talking points in RLS 2023 ranged from sustainable omnichannel retail businesses, digital transformation for small retailers, and the ever-growing Indian retail industry



The Retailers Association of India's (RAI) Retail Leadership Summit (RLS) 2023 was held on February 22 and 23 in Mumbai. The summit was an opportunity for the retail industry to come together and discuss building sustainable omnichannel retail businesses. The summit was presented by Reliance Retail, and several notable figures in the industry gave speeches.

Kumar Rajagopalan, the CEO of RAI, spoke about the growth of the

retail industry in India despite global issues around inflation and the Russia-Ukraine war. He said that technological adoption and infrastructural progress were helping Indian retail maintain a sense of positivity. He also emphasised the importance of RLS as a platform for retailers and retail service providers to connect and create better standards of retail.

RAI chairman, Bijou Kurien, set the tone for the event with his speech about the opportunity for small retailers to digitally transform their businesses. He said that tech-

nology could be adopted in batches, on a revenue model, rather than as a large capital investment. He also highlighted the potential of UPI for payments and ONDC for commerce. According to Kurien, small retailers could achieve the same capability as large retailers and gain a sustainable advantage.

The keynote address on day one was delivered by Ashwin Khasgiwala, the Chief Operations Controller of Reliance Retail Ltd. & Director of Reliance Brands Ltd. On day two, Peyush Bansal, the Co-Founder,



Chairman's Address

› **Bijou Kurien, Chairman,**
Retailers Association of India



CEO's Address

› **Kumar Rajagopalan, CEO,**
Retailers Association of India



Keynote Address

› **Ashwin Khasgiwala, Director,**
Reliance Brands Ltd. and Chief
Business Operations Controller,
Reliance Retail Ltd.



Special Address

› **P R Sharma, Chief Executive
Officer, Rajasthan Export
Promotion Council**



Presentation

› **Anoop Vasisht, Chief Revenue
Officer - Dynamic Yield,
Mastercard**



Knowledge Report

› **Abheek Singhi, Senior Partner
& Managing Director Asia-Pacific
Leader, Consumer and Retail
Practice, BCG**

Chief Executive & People Officer, India, SE Asia, Middle East, Lenskart had an in-depth one-on-one discussion with Bijou Kurien. Bansal spoke about the need for more B-school graduates to join the retail industry, saying that retail was a profession that people should be proud of.

The summit was attended by several retail leaders and top names in the retail service provider space. Kulin Lalbhai, the Executive Direc-

tor of Arvind Ltd., spoke about the negative impact of using discounts as a crutch to stimulate online hypergrowth. He hoped that as the market matured, excessive reliance on discounts would subside, and brands would work to have a unique personality and value proposition.

Venu Nair, the MD & CEO of Shoppers Stop Limited, spoke about the shift in shopping behaviour during the pandemic and how it had made

omnichannel a key way of shopping. Gunjan Shah, the MD & CEO of Bata India Ltd., spoke about the potential of the footwear segment and the opportunities for brands in terms of bringing technologies into products and big export opportunities. Abhishek Ganguly, the MD of Puma India & South East Asia, emphasized the importance of brands and retailers evolving faster and understanding consumers' needs better and faster to stand to gain. 🌱



Presentation

› Vinay Bhartia, Head - South Asia, MessageBird



Presentation

› Pranav Ahuja, CEO, Xeno



Knowledge Report

› Pankaj Renjhen, COO & Jt. Managing Director, ANAROCK Retail



Presentation

› Nirmit Parikh, CEO and Founder, apna



Special Address

› B.S. Nagesh, Founder, TRRAIN



Presentation

› Manan Chandna, Director, New Business Ventures CEO, Phantom Solutions, Bosch SDS



Presentation

› Ashish Chaturvedi, Business Head (India), Next SCM Solutions Pvt Ltd (Increff)



Presentation

› Chandradeep Bandyopadhyay, VP Engineering - Product Development, Blue Yonder



Presentation

› Pankaj Zanwar, MD, Integrated Active Monitoring Pvt. Ltd.



Presentation

› Varun Tangri, CEO, QueueBuster



Presentation

› Ashim Ashok Patil, MD & CEO,
i-TEK RFID ITEM - LEVEL RFID
TAGGING



Presentation

› Ganesan V P, Distribution Sector
Leader, IBM – India & South Asia



Presentation

› Niraj Jaipuria, Founder &
Director, BIRetail Ltd.



Presentation

› Rahul Kalidindi, CEO, Akrivia
Automation



Presentation

› Bertram Dsouza, Chief Product
& Innovation Officer, Protean
eGov Technologies Ltd.



Presentation

› Trevor Sinden, Director – MEAI,
March Networks Corporation



Presentation

› Ramkumar Rajendran, Director,
JFA



Presentation

› Arush Kakkar, CEO, Agrex.ai

FIRESIDE CHAT



› Bijou Kurien, Chairman, Retailers Association of India (RAI) in conversation with Peyush Bansal, CEO, Lenskart



Presentation

› Sagar Daryani, Co Founder & CEO, Wow! Momo Foods Pvt. Ltd.

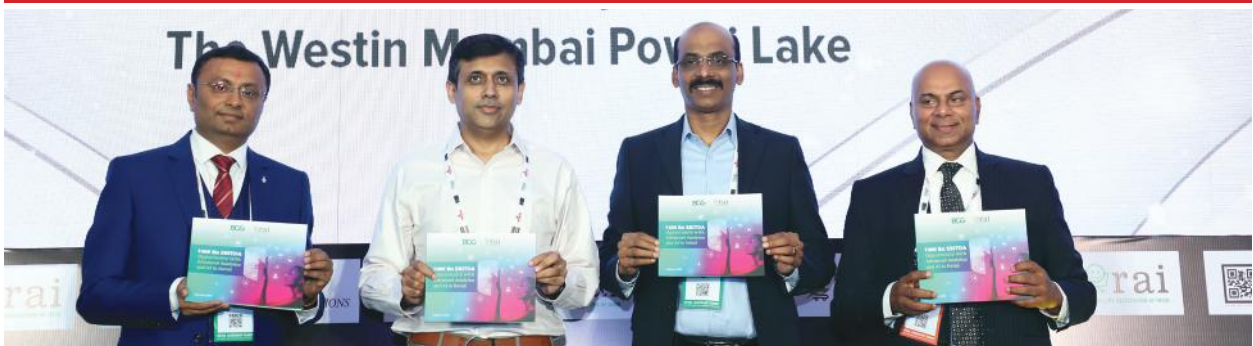
KNOWLEDGE REPORT ON INDIA RETAIL REAL ESTATE: REVIVED, RESHAPED, AND REINFORCED



Presentation

› Divya Sharma Godha, ONDC

KNOWLEDGE REPORT ON INR 400 BN EBITDA OPPORTUNITY WITH ADVANCED ANALYTICS AND AI IN RETAIL



SPECIAL ROUNDTABLES AT RLS 2023



WebEngage: Simplifying Retention for Retail & CPC Industry



Mastercard: Retail Disruptors: Economy, Consumers, Data, Ecosystem & Innovation. What is Your Big Bet?



ANAROCK Retail: Future of Retail: Navigating the Evolving Landscape and how to Drive Growth in 2023 and Beyond



Vserv: Understanding & Adopting Non-linear Customer Intelligence to accelerate Business growth



Ezetap by Razorpay: Integrating Payment Technologies in Point of Sale: Strategies for CFOs to Drive Business Growth



apna: Future of Talent Acquisition in Sourcing Retail Growth

PANEL DISCUSSION – RETAIL STRATEGY: SCENARIO PLANNING TO BUILD A SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS



► L-R: Bijou Kurien, Chairman, RAI; Venu Nair, MD & CEO, Shoppers Stop Ltd.; Ashwin Khasgiwala, Director, Reliance Brands Ltd. and Chief Business Operations Controller, Reliance Retail Ltd. and Kulin Lalbhai, ED, Arvind Ltd.

PANEL DISCUSSION – BUILDING POWERFUL RETAIL BRANDS: IMPLEMENTING YOUR UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION



► L-R: Dr. Hitesh Bhatt, Director - Marketing & Communication, Editorial Director - STOrai Magazine, RAI; Nina Lekhi, MD & Chief Design Curator, Baggit; Gunjan Shah, MD & CEO, Bata India Ltd. and Balakrishnan GP G, Leadership Team, Super Saravana Stores

PANEL DISCUSSION—ONLINE + OFFLINE = UNIFIED: THE INDIA RETAIL GROWTH STORY



► L-R: Ayushmaan Kapoor, Founder & COO, Xeno; Kavitha Rao, Managing Director & Lead – Retail, Accenture India; Dippak Khurana, CEO & Co-Founder, Vserv; Sanjeev Rao, CEO, Being Human Clothing; Anuradha Sivarajan, Strategic Accounts Director – India, Blue Yonder; Abhishek Ganguly, MD, Puma India & South East Asia; Ashish Chaturvedi, Business Head (India), Next SCM Solutions Pvt Ltd (Increff); Supreet Badrinath, Principal, Business Development, Sales & Servicing, Data & Services, Mastercard; and Venkatesalu P, CEO & ED, Trent Ltd

PANEL DISCUSSION—TECH-ENABLED 360-DEGREE COLLABORATION: SUCCESS IN AN OMNICHANNEL WORLD



► L-R: Ankur Gattani, VP - Growth and Marketing, WebEngage; Rittick Roy Burman, ED, Khadim India Ltd; Abhishek Bajpai, CEO, Apparel Group India; Adam Skinner, COO, CitrusAd; Atul Mehta, Senior Vice President - Sales, Razorpay; Amit Dutta, CEO, Le Marche Retail; Ankur Singhal, Head- Sales Express Business, Ecom Express; Archana Paralkar, Consultant, Strategic Advisory & Adoption Services, Zebra Technologies; Ashim Ashok Patil, MD & CEO, i-TEK RFID ITEM - LEVEL RFID TAGGING and Mohit Khattar, CEO, Baskin Robbins (Graviss Foods Pvt. Ltd.)

PANEL DISCUSSION—COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS IN PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY IN RETAIL: LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES



› L-R: Naveen Malpani, Partner & Consumer Sector Leader, Grant Thornton Bharat; Bhavika Dave, General Counsel, Restaurant Brands Asia Limited (Burger King); Lakshay Nijhawan, Director, Skechers South Asia Pvt. Ltd.; GR Srikanth, SVP & Head - Legal, Spencer's Retail Ltd.; Dr. Prabodh Halde, Head - Technical, Marico Ltd.; Manan Chandna, Director, New Business Ventures CEO, Phantom Solutions, Bosch SDS; Nishant Patil, Head HSE - NHQ Operations, Reliance Retail and Rajrajeshwari Shukla, General Counsel & Director Legal, Raymond Ltd.

PANEL DISCUSSION—REIMAGINING DIGITAL CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT - GOING BEYOND JUST THE SHOPPING JOURNEY



› L-R: Tirthankar Kshetrimayum, Technical marketing Head - RFID/AIDC Avery Dennison Smartrac (South Asia, Sub Saharan Africa & Middle East); Ravi Saxena, Managing Director, Wonderchef Home Appliance Pvt. Ltd; Naman Mawandia, Co-Founder, magicpin; Namit Puri, MD & Partner, BCG; Nagarajan Subramanian, Chief Strategy Officer, Baggit; Rajiv Nair, Group CEO, Kaya Ltd.; Vivek Sandhwar, COO, Being Human Clothing; and Rajneesh Mahajan, CEO, Inorbit Malls India Pvt. Ltd.

PANEL DISCUSSION—RECREATING THE MAGIC OF RETAIL: TECHNOLOGY'S ROLE IN ENHANCING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



› L-R: Sanjay Vakharia, CEO, Spykar Lifestyles Pvt. Ltd.; Niraj Jaipuria, Founder & Director, BIRetail Ltd.; Anshu Bhogra, SVP, Forever New Clothing; Nissan Joseph, CEO, Metro Brands Ltd.; Nirmitt Parikh, CEO and Founder, apna; Bertram D'Souza, Chief Product & Innovation Officer, Protean eGov Technologies Ltd.; Sugam Asani, Chief of Brands, Bestseller Retail India Pvt. Ltd; and Harsh Shah, Co-Founder, Fynd

PANEL DISCUSSION—DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND ITS IMPACT ON RETAIL GROWTH AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



› L-R: Tapan Acharya, SVP - India, CleverTap; Gaurav Dadhich, GM - Product Management, Razorpay; Kiran Komatla, Group CTO, Restaurant Brands Asia Ltd. (Burger King); Ranjan Sharma, CIO, Head - Supply Chain, Bestseller Retail India Pvt. Ltd.; Sandeep Jabbal, CDIO (Chief Digital Transformation & Information Officer) Shoppers Stop Ltd.; Sujoy Mitra, Head - IT, Tim Hortons India; and Ranjit Satyanath, CTO, Hippo Stores

PANEL DISCUSSION—RETAIL PLATFORMS AND THE FUTURE OF CONSUMER SHOPPING BEHAVIOUR



► L-R: Mahesh Reddy, CEO, GOPIZZA India; Alamjit Singh Sekhon, Commercial Director, bel India (Babybel, Boursin, kiri, The Laughing Cow, Nurishh); Saurabh Jhingan, Director and Co-Founder, Latin Quarters (IKON Retail Pvt. Ltd.); Satyen Momaya, CEO, Celio* Future Fashion Pvt. Ltd.; and Digvijay Ghosh, Partner - Consumer Product and Retail Sector and Digital commerce, EY India

PANEL DISCUSSION—INNOVATIVE RETAIL MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR ATTRACTING AND RETAINING CUSTOMERS



► L-R: Dr. Hitesh Bhatt, Director - Marketing & Communication, Editorial Director - STOrai Magazine, RAI; Sunil Kumar, Retail Head, Rocking Deals; Ankur Damani, Country Head - India & SAARC, Le Creuset; Ankur Bhatia, CEO, Chogori Retail (Columbia Sportswear, Mountain Hardwear, Deuter, BUFF, and Black Diamond); Ramesh Padala, CTO, Reliance Retail

PANEL DISCUSSION—SCALING A RETAIL STARTUP WITH SHARK INVESTMENT: STRATEGIES FOR LEVERAGING INVESTMENT TO GROW THEIR BUSINESSES



► L-R: Balachandar R, Director, Junior Kuppanna; Monish Debnath, Founding Team Member & CMO, WickedGud; Surender Gounder, Founder & CEO, Tango Eye; Suhail Sattar, Director, BASICS (HASBRO Clothing Pvt. Ltd.) and Ashok Kumar, CEO, Prakash Retail Pvt. Ltd.

PANEL DISCUSSION—WIN YOUR CUSTOMER THROUGH CONVERSATION: HOW CX IMPACTS BUSINESS GROWTH



► L-R: Maneesh Sharma, CEO, MR.D.I.Y. India; Amit Modak, CEO, Director, P N Gadgil & Sons; Shivam Jain – Principal, BCG India; Subhash Chandra L, Managing Director, Sangeetha Mobiles Pvt. Ltd.; Sheetal Patil, CEO, Cream Stone Ice Cream Concepts and Shubham Shukla, Head - Marketing (Retail), Haldiram Foods International Pvt. Ltd.

INDIA'S RETAIL CHAMPIONS AWARDS 2023. AND THE WINNERS ARE...



APPAREL & LIFESTYLE
Hidesign (Hidesign India Pvt. Ltd.)



APPAREL & LIFESTYLE
Lakshita (Lakshita Fashions Pvt. Ltd.)



APPAREL & LIFESTYLE
Killer Jeans (Kewal Kiran Clothing Company Ltd.)



APPAREL & LIFESTYLE
Manyavar (Vedant Fashions Ltd.)



BEAUTY & WELLNESS
SUGAR Cosmetics (Vellvette Lifestyle Pvt. Ltd.)



BEAUTY & WELLNESS
The Body Shop (Quest Retail Pvt. Ltd.)



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INDIA'S RETAIL CHAMPIONS AWARDS 2023. AND THE WINNERS ARE...



*CONSUMER DURABLES & IT (CDIT)
HAPPI MOBILES (Hello Mobiles Pvt. Ltd.)*



*DEPARTMENT STORE
Shoppers Stop Ltd.*



*EMERGING RETAILER OF THE YEAR
Tasva (Indivinity Clothing Retail Pvt. Ltd.)*



*EMERGING RETAILER OF THE YEAR
MR.DIY (Dua Lima Retail Pvt. Ltd.)*



*EMERGING RETAILER OF THE YEAR
Nykaa (FSN Brands Pvt. Ltd.)*



*EMERGING RETAILER OF THE YEAR
GARGI (PNGS Gargi Fashion Jewellery Ltd.)*

INDIA'S RETAIL CHAMPIONS AWARDS 2023. AND THE WINNERS ARE...



*EMERGING RETAILER OF THE YEAR
Decathlon*



*FOOD & GENERAL RETAIL (Large Format)
Le Marche (Marche Retail Pvt. Ltd.)*



*FOOD & GENERAL RETAIL (Small Format)
Nuts 'n' Spices*



*FOOD & GENERAL RETAIL (Small Format)
Arambagh's Foodmart*



*FOOTWEAR
Sreeleathers*



*FOOTWEAR
Metro Brands Ltd*

INDIA'S RETAIL CHAMPIONS AWARDS 2023. AND THE WINNERS ARE...



*HOME DECOR / HOME IMPROVEMENT
India Circus by Krsnaa Mehta, a Godrej venture*



*HOME DECOR / HOME IMPROVEMENT
Prestige Xclusive (TTK Prestige Ltd.)*



*JEWELLERY
VAIBHAV JEWELLERS (Manoj Vaibhav Gems N Jewellers Ltd.)*



*JEWELLERY
Swarovski (Swarovski India Pvt. Ltd.)*



*RESTAURANT & QSR
GOPIZZA (Gopizza India Pvt. Ltd.)*



*RESTAURANT & QSR
Haldirams*

INDIA'S RETAIL CHAMPIONS AWARDS 2023. AND THE WINNERS ARE...



RESTAURANT & QSR
Paradise Biryani (Paradise Food Court Pvt. Ltd.)



SPECIALITY RETAIL
Partshala (Beekay Parts Bazaar Pvt. Ltd.)



SPECIALITY RETAIL
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AN ECO-FRIENDLY APPROACH TO HOME FURNISHINGS

By Dhvani Thacker



The world of retail has seen an immense transformation in recent years, with e-commerce leading the way for startups to revolutionize the industry. One such startup that has been gaining a lot of attention is The Yellow Dwelling, a home furnishing brand that has recently won the Retail Startup Awards at the Retail Leadership Summit 2023. The Yellow Dwelling is a contemporary and eco-friendly brand that promises to

bring modern Indian homes natural and tastefully designed products, made from materials like cotton, linen, bamboo, banana fibres, and river grass.

In an exclusive interview with the founders of The Yellow Dwelling, Abhinayah & Nandakumar, we got a chance to learn more about their innovative approach to retail, their journey as a startup, and their vision for the future of the industry.

The Yellow Dwelling specialises

in designing and developing home furnishings and décor products that are fresh, clean, cheerful, unique in texture and finish, and are made from all-natural materials. Their collection includes curtains, cushion covers, bedding, dining, lighting, wall décor, and candles. They have five stores across Bangalore, Hyderabad, Gurgaon, and Pune, and they also ship across India and internationally via their website.

Winning the prestigious Retail

Startup Awards has been a significant achievement for the young company. When asked about their feelings about winning the award, Abhinayah & Nandakumar said, “We are truly honored to receive the retail startup of the year award by the Retailers Association of India. It feels like a pat on the back from the veterans of the industry telling us we are headed in the right direction. This is a landmark moment in the young history of our company, and we are overjoyed to win this prestigious award.”

When discussing their outlook for the retail industry, Abhinayah & Nandakumar stated that they believe offline and online commerce will co-exist, and omni-channel will become the norm. They also mentioned that although online commerce will continue to influence buying decisions to a large extent, larger purchases will be made in brick-and-mortar stores. They have noticed this trend with their customers, who still prefer to come down to their stores to complete the purchase, even though they are available online.

The founders have a clear vision of their role in impacting the industry. They aspire to build a national chain of home furnishings that is all-natural and has a unique design philosophy. They want to bring their contemporary and natural fibre furnishings and décor to tier 2 and tier 3 cities in India, not just the metros



and tier 1 cities. They also plan to be trend-setters in digitizing their stores, optimizing omni-channel to enhance customer delight, and bringing tech-enabled shopping experiences to small-format retail stores.

When asked about the future of retail in India, Abhinayah & Nandakumar were optimistic. They believe that India will see exponential growth in organized retail, fueled by the growth in tier 2 and tier 3 cities. With the highest number of upper middle-class families and increasing disposal incomes, the Indian retail industry is poised to grow. They also noted that India is the key focus market for many internation-

al brands, and retailers will have to upgrade themselves to cater to the tech-savvy Gen Z and millennials. Tech-enabled solutions will make inroads in the traditional retail industry, and retailers will have to adapt to stay relevant.

In conclusion, The Yellow Dwelling is a young and innovative startup that has taken on the challenge of bringing natural and eco-friendly home furnishings and décor to modern Indian homes. Their success in winning the Retail Startup Awards is a testament to their vision and approach to retail. As they continue to grow and expand their reach, they will undoubtedly have a wider reach. 🧐

THE SAREE REVOLUTION: THIS WOMEN-LED STARTUP IS DOING ITS BIT TO DISRUPT FASHION

By Dhvani Thacker

Shobitam, founded by sisters Aparna and Ambika Thyagarajan, focuses on traditional and contemporary fashion. The company recently won first runner-up at the Retail Startup Awards. The sisters spoke about the company's inspiration, challenges, and future outlook.

Founded on March 8, 2019, Shobitam is a women-led startup that aims to help people feel good, look good, and do good. Shobitam works closely with over 540 weavers across 19 cities in India to design unique collections and popularise lesser-known and unique weaves. The company sells these products directly to customers through an online platform.

Winning the Retail Startup Awards first runner-up prize was a proud moment for the team. It validated the company's vision and laser focus on customer obsession, where it has received over 7000+ 5-star customer reviews. Shobitam sees itself as a world-class D2C brand from



India, for the world. "This award motivates us to work harder to build a world class D2C brand from India, for the world," said Aparna.

Both founders are of the firm belief that the Indian retail industry, especially e-commerce, is growing at a fast pace. With over 18 million Indians in the global diaspora, there is a huge demand for ethnic wear.

The company is leveraging technology and innovating for the industry to disrupt the handlooms, arts & crafts space. "Deep analysis of on-

line purchases and browsing history is helping e-retail players get a better understanding of their customers. Unique Products are being designed and priced "correctly" based on live data streams from hundreds of signals," the founders added.

Shobitam has grown 12X in the last three years and continues to grow rapidly towards becoming a Rs 100Cr brand by 2026. The company hopes to offer great selections, convenience, fast delivery globally, and delight customers with the Shobitam experience. 😊

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THE WOMEN'S COMPANY: EMPOWERING SUSTAINABLE RETAIL AND HEALTH IN INDIA

By Dhvani Thacker

In a world where sustainability and organic products are becoming increasingly important, a startup that is paving the way for women's health and well-being has caught the attention of many. The Women's Company, founded by Roopam Sharma and Anika Parashar is changing the face of the retail industry by empowering women and creating organic, biodegradable pads, tampons, medical grade silicone menstrual cups, biodegradable razors and recyclable urination devices – all Made in India.

Sharma and Parashar launched the company with a strong focus on sustainable and eco-friendly products for women's health. The startup has received an encouraging push due to the pressing need for sustainable products, especially in the women's health sector.

One of The Women's Company's unique selling points is the world's first teenage pad, specially tailored to the bodies of young girls and made from ultra-soft materials. The company's urination devices



are one-time-use, disposable, and biodegradable, allowing women to avoid contracting UTIs and other infections from public toilets.

Parashar has a long history of building women's health and brands in India. Her passion for creating and providing meaningful solutions for women's overall health and wellness has driven her to build a company that prioritises women's health over anything else.

The Women's Company's commitment to providing organic and biodegradable products has earned the startup the title of the second runner-up of the Retail Startup Awards, a recognition that moti-

vates the team to continue building a positive impact on society, womanhood, and the planet.

Both Sharma and Paraskar firmly believe that the Indian retail industry is a mammoth ship with a common goal of bringing in opportunities for jobs and product innovation. As e-commerce evolves, the retail industry is only bound to grow multi-fold.

As The Women's Company continues to empower women and change the face of the retail industry, the startup is sure to inspire other entrepreneurs to build businesses that prioritise sustainability, health, and well-being. 😊



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EMBRACING CHANGE: THE THREE R's FOR SUCCESS IN THE FUTURE OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Yeshasvini Ramaswamy, Serial Entrepreneur and CEO of Great Place to Work India, talks of the key ingredients that enable sustainable career growth in the new era of work

As we move into a new era of work, it is essential to reimagine, reinvent, and re-evaluate the way we approach learning and development for our workforce. These three concepts form the foundation of a successful and sustainable career, and as individuals and organizations, we must embrace them to stay competitive and thrive.

REIMAGINE

As the world rapidly changes, it is important for us to reimagine the way we approach our careers and our lives. In my 24 years of experience, I have mainly come across three types of biases, one of which is age bias. While a successful career may seem glamorous from the outside, it often comes with a feeling of isolation and being alone. As young achievers, we turn to ourselves to be our very own best friend.

As an Indian, I am proud of the way our country has positioned itself on the global economic scale.



The industry we at RAI represent has the power to be a game-changer and make a significant impact on policy-making. It is time for us to think about the influence we can have as individuals and as an industry in shaping our world for the better.

Throughout my career, I have never stuck to pre-defined norms when it came to doing things. My father once told me that there is

a difference between bravery and foolishness, and choose wisely. This advice has stayed with me and I have always had the courage to reimagine and walk my own path. I have never viewed my career as a sequential journey, but rather as a career portfolio build.

We must as industry leaders have the courage to think beyond what is typically expected of us and break free from the constraints of

traditional career paths and expectations. By doing so, we can bring fresh perspectives and innovative ideas to the table, which can be a powerful catalyst for change and progress.

Let us reimagine the way we approach our careers and our lives, and the lives of our employees with an unwavering commitment to forging a better future for ourselves and for those around us.

REINVENT

Motivation may be a temporary feeling, much like the seasonal flu, but what endures is knowledge and ability. Passion is often discussed, but it is substance coupled with the tenacity that truly matters. As an HR professional, I entered the field because I loved working with people. I saw organisations as a catalyst for personal growth, helping individuals become their best selves.

Over time, I transitioned into portfolio management of angel investments, which came with its own set of challenges, including difficult conversations, taking huge risks in the future, etc. Eventually, I became a serial entrepreneur, diversifying my roles and continuously evolving as a person. I grew and adapted as I learnt.

To those who are paving their own path and seeking advice, remember that you are on a unique journey that nobody else knows about. Seeking validation from oth-



ers can cause you to lose sight of your own goals and values. It is important to listen to what others have to say, but ultimately, you must trust your own instincts and stay true to yourself.

In the end, it is expertise and personal values that propels growth that will truly make a difference in your life and career. Remember to focus on developing your skills and knowledge, and let that drive you towards success.

RE-EVALUATE

Self-reflection is a powerful tool that can help us achieve personal growth and development. It is crucial to take stock of our lives regularly and re-evaluate our choices to ensure we are fulfilling our potential. If we are not enjoying what we're doing, it's time to make a change. We owe it to ourselves to believe in our worth and invest in our development.

As we look towards the future, fairness and equity will be key differentiators between the best workplaces and the rest. We must focus on building a workplace culture that is inclusive and equitable, valuing

the unique contributions of everyone. Inclusion alone is not enough; we must also invest in equity to create an environment that fosters growth and development for all.

When we prioritize equity, we create a culture where everyone can thrive. It is important to acknowledge the historical and systemic barriers that have prevented some individuals and even communities from reaching their full potential. By breaking down these barriers and creating a more equitable workplace, we empower everyone to succeed.

In conclusion, reimagining, re-inventing, and re-evaluating are essential ingredients for the future of workforce development. As individuals and organizations, we must embrace these concepts to stay competitive and thrive in the years to come. The future belongs to those who are willing to break free from the limitations of the past and embrace the possibilities of the future. Let us build a world of work that is fair, equitable, and sustainable for all. 😊

MANAGING EMPLOYEE TURNOVER IN THE INDIAN RETAIL INDUSTRY

By Ajin Pisharody

The fact that Indian retail industry is one of the fastest growing industries in the country is no secret. And with the pace and scale of growth comes the challenges and opportunities associated with it.

One of the biggest among these opportunities and challenges we have today is talent. India, with a median age of 28 years (according to 2020 census) has one of the largest talent pools for any industry. However, managing employee turnover has become a major challenge for many retail companies in India.

High employee turnover can lead to increased costs, decreased productivity, and a negative impact on customer satisfaction. To manage employee turnover effectively, it is important for retail companies to understand the reasons for turnover and implement strategies to reduce it.

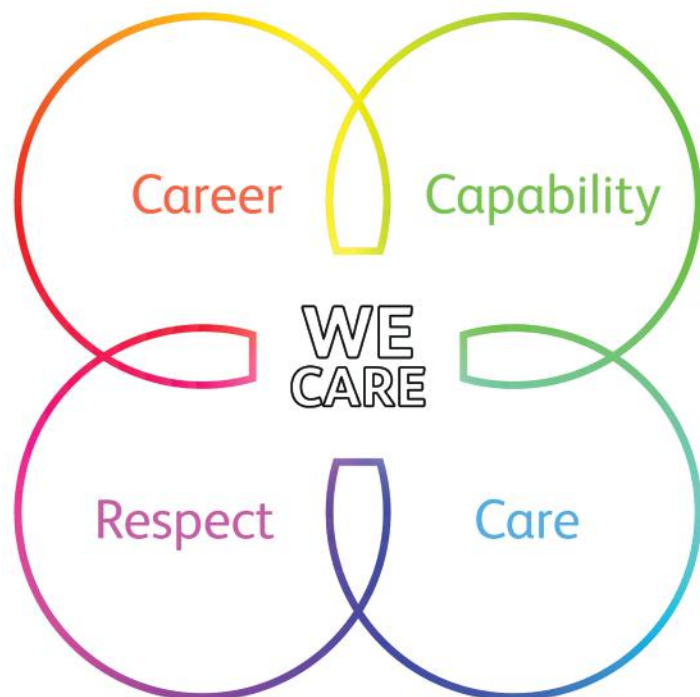
Reliance Retail has a four-dimensional strategy to help the compa-

ny build a strong relationship with its employees, to help them realise their career aspirations. These levers help organisations improve job satisfaction and build a progressive and inclusive work environment.

CAREER GROWTH

To drive Capability Building and Ca-

reer Progression across the Employee Life Cycle, an organisation should inspire a pull-based learning culture in which employees are provided with multiple opportunities and mediums to learn and build their capabilities. The full spectrum of development across multiple phases of an employee's life enables hori-





zontal, vertical, and diagonal career growth for our employees.

Programmes like Step-up – A role-based career aspiration lead program curated as a learning journey to develop identified talent pool through structured assessment and training – should be encouraged. The Step-up programme is successfully managed across Store Operations and enabling functions to build a strong talent pipeline across the verticals for employees to move up the ladder.

To ensure that employees gain a wide range of experiences across functions, channels and formats, organisations such as Reliance Retail encourage diagonal mobility. Initiatives like cross-spring are focused towards making employees ready for career options across functions and businesses. Employees can choose their career moves and this

then gets assigned to similar programmes at central and format levels.

Similarly, WE – a women leader programme – is designed as a focused and structured leadership programme for high-potential women at mid- level, helping them to become a powerful contributor to long-term corporate success. These virtual modules have multiple elements including structured webinars, real-time assignments, internal mentoring programme, and nudge calls.

The CEO Trailblazer Program is an eight-month long learning programme, designed to give an opportunity to a select, qualified group of employees to learn first-hand from the senior leaders in the organisation. This unique programme is intercepted with classroom sessions, experiential learnings, and project

work both individual and group. The participants in the programmes proved better than their counterparts in the subsequent assessments/development centres.

CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

While business learning academies help manage the immediate and long-term capability requirement for the store and field operations, specialised COEs help build targeted and future focused skills.

Functional Capability Academy identifies the potential successors across all the levels, and develops them for the next level roles with a certification programme. They will be considered as successors through an internal talent marketplace platform.

Future Skills Academy enables building hardcore tech and functional capabilities on the latest technol-



ogy and behavioural requirements keeping in mind the future trends evolving in retail and beyond. The academy allows the employees to expand the horizon on growth and implementation of business strategies in line with future changes.

Coaching on demand platform helps drive a coaching culture within the organisation by democratising coaching. To enable the same, we have built a pool of certified internal coaches who provide need based coaching support in three stages – performance coaching, succession coaching and transition coaching.

Technology-enabled learning: We endeavour to facilitate individual and organization growth by democratising learning. To enable learning without constraints of

space or time, we channelised our automated learning programs on our LMS, LinkedIn Learning, Coursera and curated relevant VILT programs, to encourage employees in transitioning to the new learning paradigm.

Micro-learning modules such as Micro Reels empowers the learners with quick on-demand learning in the form of infographics, short format videos, and podcasts.

Chatbot based offerings informs employees of relevant trainings based on their requirements and aptitude.

CARE FOR EMPLOYEES’ HEALTH

The R-Swasthya programme focuses on ensuring physical wellbeing of our employees, under which hospital tie-ups were done across

different geographies, including Tier-II and Tier-III cities, so that proper medical care can be extended to our employees and their family members. Also, Reliance Employee and Family Emergency Response Service (REFERS) is our 24*7 Medical Emergency services strengthened to provide medical support to our employees during any medical exigency.

An initiative called “SPRING (Success through Positivity and Resilience through Inner Growth) focuses on building emotional & mental wellbeing through an ongoing series of workshops on positive thinking habits & wellness.

RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

Our flagship initiatives ‘Jagriti’ and ‘Pragati’ was designed for the wom-



en employees to help them move to managerial roles in store, warehouse, and field operations. These programs helped women employees to break the mental barriers, inhibitions and instil a sense of self-belief.

There is conscious and consistent effort to support and drive gender diversity and inclusion by the businesses. Some of the practices include – ‘All Women Stores’ and Women-Led Stores, led by women store managers.

‘Project Sakhi’ is an initiative towards reinforcement of safety, hygiene and well-being of women store employees. Two Sakhi’s (women employees) are identified per store for other women working in the stores to reach for help/support and guidance.

‘SHE Box’ is an initiative keeping in view the Health & Wellness of our

Women Store Employees. Most of our stores have a ‘SHE box’ consisting of Sanitary pads, Sewing needle & thread and Safety pins under the custody of senior women employees at respective stores.

Managing employee turnover is a challenge for many retail companies in India including us at Reliance. However, by understanding the reasons for turnover and implementing effective strategies with employees at the heart of it has helped us reduce turnover and improve overall employee satisfaction. These initiatives have not only helped us increase productivity, but also help reduce costs, and enhance customer satisfaction. We believe retail companies that invest in their employees and provide a positive work environment will be more successful in retaining top talent and achieving long-term success in the competitive Indian retail industry. 🧐



Ajin Pisharody is a seasoned Talent Development professional with over 15 years of experience in core L&D function. He is an XLRI Alumnus and has worked in multiple industries ranging from Hospitality, Real Estate to Pharmaceuticals. Currently he is associated with Reliance Retail as General Manager – Learning & Development in the Talent Transformation team. He is passionate about Learning & Talent Management technologies & using the same to build unparalleled talent experience.

RETAIL L&D SUMMIT: FUTURE-PROOFING RETAIL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

The Retail Learning & Development Summit 2023 featured thought-provoking discussions on the latest technology, personalisation, workplace culture, and inclusivity for all



The Retail Learning & Development Summit 2023 was recently held in Mumbai, hosted by the Retailers Association of India (RAI) and attended by top retail L&D leaders and experts. The summit was focused on reimagining, reinventing, and re-evaluating

the future of L&D in the retail industry.

The attendees were part of several conversations, networking opportunities, and panel discussions, where they discussed the future of training and how to shake things up in the industry. They delved into the

latest and greatest technology, such as AI, predictive analytics, and VR, which are revolutionizing the way we train employees.

Setting the context of the summit, Kumar Rajagopalan, CEO of RAI, said, “This year, we’re diving deep into how retailers are rethink-



Keynote Address

› **Yeshasvini Ramaswamy, Serial Entrepreneur & CEO, Great Place to Work® India (Culture, AI and M&A)**



Welcome Address

› **Kumar Rajagopalan, CEO, Retailers Association of India**



Presentation

› **Suresh Kumar DN, CEO, Tesseract Learning Pvt. Ltd.**



Presentation

› **Shiladitya Mallik, Chief Business Officer, SmartWinnr**

ing their approach to learning and development for their workforce. One big change we're seeing is the rise of "phygital" shopping, where consumers are blending online and in-store experiences. This has forced retailers to rethink how they do business, and the summit is the perfect opportunity for them to come together and share ideas on how to stay ahead of the curve."

Kumar Rajagopalan also spoke on how the marketing term 'seg-

mentation' had evolved and there was a greater focus on personalization. "PAFE - Personalized, Accurate, Fast, Everywhere, is the new way to look at how every aspect of retail operates. It is therefore important to add PAFE to the learning & development of the workforce."

The highlight of the RAI Learning & Development Summit 2023 was a keynote address by Yeshasvini Ramaswamy, Serial Entrepreneur & CEO, Great Place to Work® India (Culture, AI and M&A). During her keynote, Yeshasvini said, "To overcome global uncertainty, organizations must build a workplace culture for their employees that helps them to be the best version of themselves. The year 2022 was a year of sustainability for workplaces in India. Between 2017 and 2022, India has moved to become a more impartial, collaborative, fair, and caring place to work when compared to workplace culture globally. The focus for

the year 2023 will be on fairness in the workplace, equality, and credibility of management, among other aspects. Future workplaces will be more inclusive."

Thought-provoking panel discussions had retail CHROs and CLOs deliberating on the many aspects of Learning & Development in the context of reimagining, reinventing, and re-evaluating methods of learning, skill training, and organizational culture. Topics discussed at the summit were 'Reimagine: Learning strategies for an evolving future'; 'Reinvent: Learning culture - A solution for inclusion'; 'Re-evaluate: Leadership Development - It Starts From the Top'; among others.

During the panel discussion on reimagining learning strategies, while speaking about the challenges faced when personalizing learning for each individual in the frontline workforce, Nirav Jagad, Chief Peo-

ple Officer, SUGAR Cosmetics, said, “Cookie-cutter approach is easy, but it doesn’t move the needle. For high-impact learning, initiatives ask what the associate wants. Figure out how we can provide the solution in the way they want. It sounds idealistic, but there is no other way to do that.”

Attendees also delved into the use of AI, predictive analytics, and VR to personalize training for individuals in the frontline workforce. Nirav Jagad, Chief People Officer of SUGAR Cosmetics, said, “Cookie-cutter approach is easy, but it doesn’t

move the needle. For high-impact learning, initiatives ask what the associate wants. Figure out how we can provide the solution in the way they want. It sounds idealistic, but there is no other way to do that.”

In addition to keynote speeches and panel discussions, roundtable sessions were themed on “Next Gen Retail Workforce: Building a strong culture for every retail employee” and “Adapting to a New L&D Reality in the post-pandemic era: skills-stack, performance, & learning pathways.”

The summit featured a diverse

range of leaders from the retail industry, including Anjali Goel, Head of HR at V-Mart Retail; Bidisha Banerjee, Group Senior VP Learning, Culture and Employer Branding at Welspun Group; Gauri Dalal, Associate Vice President - Learning & Development at Nykaa; Jeeva Balakrishnan, Chief Talent Officer at Reliance Retail Ltd.; Nandini Mehta, CHRO at Metro Brands Ltd.; Nirav Jagad, Chief People Officer at SUGAR Cosmetics; Neelam Ahluwalia, Vice President - L&D at Bigbasket; Robin Sharma, Head of L&D at Croma. 😊

PANEL DISCUSSION ON REIMAGINE: LEARNING STRATEGIES FOR AN EVOLVING FUTURE POWDERED BY DISPRZ



► L-R: Vibhavari Bali, Associate Director - People, Disprz; Nandini Mehta, CHRO, Metro Brands Ltd.; Jeeva Balakrishnan, Chief Talent Officer, Reliance Retail Ltd.; Nirav Jagad, Chief People Officer, SUGAR Cosmetics and Gauri Dalal, Associate Vice President - Learning & Development, Nykaa



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PANEL DISCUSSION ON REINVENT: LEARNING CULTURE - A SOLUTION FOR INCLUSION



► L-R: Ameesha Prabhu, CEO & Co-Founder, Trust for Retailers & Retail Associates of India; Aniket Shukla, VP - Brands Business, Magicpin; Bidisha Banerjee, Group Senior VP Learning, Culture and Employer Branding, Welspun Group; Neelam Ahluwalia, Vice President - L&D, Bigbasket; Robin Sharma, Head - L&D, Croma - Infiniti Retail Ltd. and Tanaz Mulla, Head - Corporate HR, Trent Ltd.

PANEL DISCUSSION ON RE-EVALUATE: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT - IT STARTS FROM THE TOP



► L-R: Seema Arora Nambiar, Strategic Growth Consultant; Vijay Kar, GM – HR, Lead HRBP Retail, Bata India Ltd.; Kanchan Banerjee, CHRO, Vedant Fashions Ltd. (Manyavar Mohey); Alex Mathew, Head - HR, Max & Easybuy; Isuru Kalamulla Waduge, Country Leadership and Competence Manager, IKEA and Ramakrishna Rao, Chief Learning Officer, Page Industries Ltd.

ROUNDTABLE ON NEXT GEN RETAIL WORKFORCE: BUILDING A STRONG CULTURE FOR EVERY RETAIL EMPLOYEE - FROM THE SALESFLOOR TO HQ (POWERED BY AKRIVIA HCM)



ROUNDTABLE ON ADAPTING TO A NEW L&D REALITY IN THE POST-PANDEMIC ERA: SKILLS-STACK, PERFORMANCE, & LEARNING PATHWAYS (POWERED BY DISPRZ)



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LEARNING CHAMP - WINNERS 2023



Winner - Tanya Arora, Reliance Retail - Apparel and Clothing



First Runner-up - Ronit Hassanwalia, V Mart Retail Ltd.



Second Runner-up - Anju Verma, Croma - Infiniti Retail Ltd..

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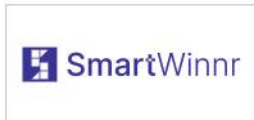
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RESPONSIBLE SOURCING: FUTURE OF INDIAN RETAIL

Retailers can play a crucial role in addressing deforestation and promoting sustainable supply chains by encouraging responsible sourcing of commodities. By adopting initiatives like making time-bound commitments, developing no-deforestation policies, and adopting voluntary standards and certifications, retailers can move towards sustainable supply chains while holding companies accountable, write [Karishma Vohra](#), [Sanjana Das](#), and [Vishal Dev](#)

Forests are vital to the planet as they provide critical ecosystem services, and are amongst the largest, most cost-effective climate solutions available today. Over 1.6 billion people depend directly on forests for their income, employment opportunities, and for sourcing commodities. However, increased demand of certain raw materials has implications on the health of forests. It is estimated that almost 10 million hectares of forests are lost every year.

The loss of forests often has a devastating impact on communities and indigenous people, biodiversity, and climate change. This makes deforestation one of the most significant global environmental challenges today.

The World Resources Institute (WRI) estimates that seven commodities, which include cattle, palm oil, soya, cocoa, rubber, wood, and



coffee account for 57 per cent of all tree cover losses associated with agriculture between 2001 and 2015. Forest-linked commodities including soya and palm oil (including their derivatives) are used in a wide range of food products and other consumer goods. Transforming their supply chains towards sustainability has the potential to significantly reduce

deforestation and resulting climate change while providing sustainable livelihoods for communities.

Companies involved in the food and consumer goods sector have committed to removing deforestation from their supply chains through various declarations. Despite this, several company commitments are yet to be met and to

achieve this, the need for creating an enabling environment through public and private sector partnership cannot be overstated. Retailers, being the intermediaries between manufacturers and consumers, have the opportunity to play a key role in bringing about this transformation through encouraging the shift towards responsible sourcing of commodities that form an important component of the ingredient list of their products.

CONSUMERS ARE DEMANDING SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS

Over the years, we have witnessed a global increase in consumer awareness for environment-friendly products. A global survey by IBM on ‘Balancing Sustainability and Profitability’ of 16,000 global consumers in 10 major economies highlights that around 51 per cent of the respondents feel that environmental sustainability is a more important criteria for them now, particularly after the pandemic. Meanwhile, 49 per cent of the consumers claim that they have paid a premium for products that have been branded as ‘sustainable’. The same trend has been witnessed in the Asia-Pacific region, including in India, as highlighted by a recent study by Bain & Company (2022), which states that around 94 per cent of Indian consumers are willing to pay more for sustainable products; 52 per cent of them plan to spend more in future for the sustainable products; and



20 per cent cite environmental and social benefits as top purchasing criterion.

Such trends are likely to exert pressure on retailers to meet the demand of consumers, and put forth an opportunity for them to play a critical role in acting as a ‘bridge’ between sustainable production and consumption.

RETAILERS: A DRIVING FORCE FOR RESPONSIBLE SOURCING

It is estimated that supply chains of

94 per cent of Fortune 1000 Companies were disrupted by the pandemic. With an increase in online shopping and e-commerce platforms, the industry has witnessed a steady growth. The global retail industry is expected to reach USD 18.33 billion in 2028, growing at a CAGR of 17.7 per cent (2021-28).

The Indian retail market is estimated to reach USD 2 trillion by 2032, while the e-commerce industry is expected to cross USD 350 billion by 2030, growing at a CAGR of

Steps to Transition towards Responsible Sourcing and Sustainable Supply Chains



23 per cent. This growth is mostly driven by the socio-demographic and economic factors such as urbanisation, income growth and the increasing number of nuclear families. It is also estimated that around 85 per cent of global retailers regard responsible sourcing as a sustainability pillar for the grocery segment. This coupled with increasing consumer demand for sustainable products and strong investor push strengthens the case for responsible sourcing in retail supply chains.

Various initiatives can be undertaken by retailers globally to move towards better practices. Making time-bound commitments, developing NDPE (No Deforestation, No Peat, No Exploitation) policies for

sustainable sourcing, publicly disclosing progress through disclosure tools, adopting voluntary standards and certifications, joining regional platforms and coalitions, are some of the steps that retailers can take in order to transition towards sustainable supply chains.

Sustainability certifications, which ensure that the ingredient in their product has been sourced in an environmentally and socially responsible manner, such as the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) for sustainable timber & paper, Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) for sustainable palm oil, and a Roundtable on Responsible Soy (RTRS) for sustainable soya are increasingly being adopted by

retailers to demonstrate their commitment towards deforestation and forest conversion free sourcing practices. Global retailers such as Marks & Spencer have 100 per cent of palm oil RSPO certified, while more than 98 per cent of the wood used by IKEA is FSC certified. The retailers also have tremendous influence on their suppliers including the consumer goods and F&B manufacturers in order to push them towards sustainable procurement practices through monitoring, engagement and capacity building.

Traceability, which means understanding where the product came from and how it was made is a crucial factor in disclosing sourcing information to stakeholders. It



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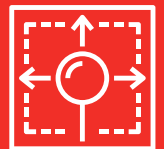
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enables consumers to ensure that the ingredients in the products they purchase does not contribute to deforestation while holding companies accountable, making it easier to identify those that are purchasing, and utilizing sustainable and deforestation-free raw materials. With palm being an integral ingredient in more than half of all retail products, be it personal care including shampoo, lipstick, toothpaste, soap, or cookies, savories etc, it becomes crucial to ensure that the palm sourced is environmentally and socially sustainable. In this context, the WWF's Palm Oil Buyers Scorecard (POBS) is a tool that assesses palm oil buyers across the supply chain and evaluates the progress they have made towards sustainable palm oil, thereby encouraging traceability and transparency in the sourcing practice. The 2021 edition of the POBS assessed a total of 227 companies from across the world out of which 63 were retailers. Global retailers like IKEA, Tesco, Marks & Spencer, and Indian companies like Godrej report on the POBS as well as on the RSPO's Annual Communication of Progress. POBS helps companies using palm oil in their products to identify opportunities for improvement in their own policies, operations, and sustainability efforts. It enables benchmarking against peers and the ability to demonstrate progress over the time while commending the leaders driv-

ing transformation towards sustainable palm oil.

SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL PROCUREMENT GUIDE

While global retailers have been leading the way towards sustainable sourcing of forest and agricultural commodities, it is also important to highlight that this concept is new in the Indian market. However, Indian retailers are now slowly and gradually understanding the need for taking action towards sustainable supply chains. WWF-India has been supporting companies on this journey and one such tool that helps retailers & companies deliver positive impact is The 'Sustainable Palm Oil Procurement Guide for Conscious Buyers in India'. The guide which was launched at **Retailer Association of India's** Retail Leadership Summit is a guidance tool outlining steps in line with the Accountability Framework Initiative's 12 core principles that palm oil using companies in the Indian market can adopt to develop transparent and sustainable supply chains. The guide also highlights best practices and can prove to be a stepping stone for companies who want to start their journey towards responsible sourcing of palm oil.

WAY FORWARD

There is an urgent need to rethink business models, processes and systems to build sustainability and resilience in the supply chain, especially in case of forest and agri-

culture-linked commodities such as palm oil. While, there has been a lot of progress made by global retailers to transition towards sustainable supply chains, it is also imperative to highlight that there has been a certain level of momentum witnessed in the Indian market. For example, Reliance has a rigorous due diligence process for its suppliers in order to ascertain the compliance of their suppliers with labour and human rights, health and safety, environmental protection, ethical conduct, business integrity and confidentiality laws and standards. On the other hand, Aditya Birla have developed a 'Sustainability 2025 Strategy' with a particular focus on product design and development, customer centricity and supply chain by leveraging innovation and technology. These initiatives pave the way for a sustainable retail sector, encouraging more and more companies to take action towards responsible sourcing through collaboration within the value chain and bridging the gap between demand and supply of sustainably sourced products. 🌱

The article has been written by experts from WWF India: Karishma Vohra, Senior Expert – Commodities and Sustainable Supply Chains, Sustainable Business; Sanjana Das, Senior Programme Officer, Sustainable Business; Vishal Dev, Director, Sustainable Business

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PHYSICAL STORES THAT LEAD THE EXPERIENCE REVOLUTION WILL THRIVE

The digital shopping experience is not going anywhere. But neither is the store experience. In fact, sustainability, low carbon footprints, and new rules regarding exchange is what is promoted people to go back to stores to shop, writes [Frederic Perodeau](#)



A few years ago, we feared the total disappearance of the stores in favour of online retail. We were partially correct. While the physical store didn't disappear, we did witness an exponential growth of online sales.

When the world was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, the retail world

turned upside down. As the world returned to normal, we predicted retail models that were successful in 2018-19.

However, in the past few months, there has been a drop in online purchases, particularly in the United States and Europe. 2022 witnessed a 20 per cent drop in online sales – something none of us expected to

see.

There are three factors that have contributed to this trend. Firstly, people have become more mindful that purchasing something from the other side of the world means an increased carbon footprint. Instead of buying international brands, people have opted to go local. Homegrown brands, too, are more mindful that

people are willing to pay extra for high-quality sustainable products. It then becomes a win-win for all.

Secondly, online portals are now charging customers who want to return their products. In Europe and the United States, the cost of returning a parcel is anything between \$15 and \$18.

Finally, store experiences have become a critical part of the physical store. Thanks to these experiences, customers now browse online and visit the physical store to make the purchase post experience.

HOW CAN RETAILERS CAPITALISE?

Naturally, the retailers who will stay ahead of the curve are the ones that will capitalise on this situation. Here are some suggestions that retailers could employ to do the same. Firstly, retailers need to realise that shoppers do not want to look at screens all the time. Digital tools are required to target two specific things

- 1) Cancel all can halt the purchasing process (queue at checkouts, out of stocks, wrong information about product)
- 2) To help employees connect with shoppers

Secondly, artificial intelligence must be used smartly. Retailers should use AI to manage customer data, and not as a tool to influence shopper behaviour. AI should also



be used to manage inventory in the warehouse and store shelves.

Finally, retailers need to rethink the store experience by moving out of 'products and stores' to 'customer focus'. By doing this, retailers achieve the following

- Defining a target shopper to build an assortment dedicated to the target audience
- Redefining the selling journey by understanding that you can't sell everything
- To personalise communication and promotion
- To eliminate factors that hinder store business
- To motivate and train teams to do their job

To conclude: Do you know why

a shopper will go on to visit the physical stores? To find all that he can't find online. In conclusion, the retail industry has undergone significant changes in the last few years, with a shift towards online sales, followed by a drop in recent months. This trend can be attributed to consumers' growing concern for sustainability, the added cost of returning products online, and the importance of in-store experiences. Retailers who want to stay ahead of the curve must embrace technology, such as AI, to manage customer data, inventory, and improve the store experience. The focus should be on the customer, with a defined target audience, a personalised selling journey, and a motivated and trained team. By doing so, retailers can continue to grow and succeed in this ever-changing industry. 😊

THE MILE HIGH CLUB: AIRPORT RETAIL SOARING; CX GOING TO NEW LEVELS

A 90-minute window is all a customer has between security clearance and boarding a flight. What they do during that time depends on how airport retailers define the shopping experience. From the looks of it, that has been a lot, writes **Jayadev Calamur**

Airport retailing in India has been experiencing significant growth in recent years, driven by the increasing number of air passengers and their changing preferences. With the growth of the middle class in India and rising disposable incomes, consumers are looking for a better shopping experience and are willing to spend more money on quality products. This has led to a surge in demand for retail and food outlets at airports, which has created a vast market for retailers to tap into.

Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia had in March 2023 said that India had outlined plans to invest billions of dollars in airports, aircrafts, and recruitment. Growth will include new airports, more regulators and air traffic controllers, and new flying schools.

India has proposed to spend \$11.88 billion by 2025 to boost re-



gional connectivity by constructing airports and modernising existing ones. Scindia said passenger capacity at the country's six major airports is expected to grow to 420 million in four years from 192 million today, and Indian carriers' fleet will grow to

2,000 aircraft in five years from 700.

RETAIL IN AIRPORTS

India has become one of the fastest-growing aviation markets in the world, and its airports have become the new frontier for retail businesses. Only on November 8, did Prime

Minister Narendra Modi inaugurate the newly-constructed Chennai International Airport with state-of-the-art facilities.

The country's major airports have been investing heavily in creating world-class shopping experiences for travellers. The biggest airports i.e. Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru already boast of several retail brands – some luxury, some high-end, and some medium, as well as several QSR outlets, along with fine-dining places.

CHALLENGES

One of the biggest challenges is the strict security regulations at airports, which can limit the types of products that can be sold. However, with the right strategies, retailers can overcome these challenges and take advantage of the opportunities offered by the growing airport retailing sector in India.

Ranodeep Saha, Co-founder of Rare Planet, an airport-specific retail chain that has 35 stores across 31 airports in India, says that the biggest challenge for a retailer is getting all the required licences. "It takes 3-5 months to get all clearances to set up shop at airports. In all, there are 12 certifications. We were lucky that all our directors were Indian origin, so acquiring the certificates was less cumbersome. However, once we set up shop, there is nothing more rewarding as airport retail," he says.



▶ Ranodeep Saha and Vijaya Kumar TR, the co-founders of Rare Planet

Saha also says that there are restrictions while selling at airports. For starters, due to security challenges sharp and pointed objects are a strict no. "We're aware that we are an airport-only set up, and there are restrictions, but the good thing is that once you understand the art of setting up shop at an Indian airport, you can do it anywhere else in the world," he adds.

Currently, 40 per cent of the stock at individual stores at Rare Planet's retail outlets are locally sourced, while 60 per cent come from various parts of the country. "The idea is to promote local artisans and give people travelling quality products to give them the idea of what India provides," he added.

GOING BEYOND THE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

Retailers have also expressed praise

for certain brands that have reinvented themselves at airports. Arvind Dadu, Managing Director, Anand Sweets & Savouries uses Starbucks as an example. "Starbucks at the airport is one brand I admire, as they are creating spaces where travellers prefer to spend time, rather than the airport lounges. The product mix, staff training, and the ambience created by Starbucks at their airport cafes caters to a diverse audience comprising various age groups, and welcomes them all to have a good time while they wait," he said.

Anand Sweets & Savouries, too, has made it a point to focus on an experiential airport retail experience. "We've designed special retail packs as part of our Heritage Collection, where we have created specially handcrafted offerings from different Indian states – Karnataka,

Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh. Each of these packs features products from the respective regions and they are available only at our airport outlets. In this way, we are able to present customers with an experience they can carry with them.

The growth of airport retailing in India has also attracted the attention of international brands looking to expand their presence in the country. Many global retailers have partnered with Indian firms to establish outlets at airports. Additionally, airport retailing has created thousands of jobs in India, ranging from sales associates to managers and executives. This has helped to boost the country's economy and create opportunities for many people.

Both Saha and Dadu say that the airport retail industry in India has witnessed an upward trend. Industry reports too have highlighted the growing demand for luxury gifting options in airport retail. Therefore, brands need to cater to the airport retail segment. The way to do so is to invest in a format that is specially customised to be travel-friendly. These offerings could range from pre-launch sneak peeks into a catalogue extension, to specially packaged products for gifting, to airport-only exclusives that pique curiosity among enthusiasts.

It is also important to maximise

the experiential aspect within limited floor space at an airport; however, space utilization also comes into play when packaging the product itself. The retail display too, should focus more on such offerings, by making use of the right height and lighting, along with the right call outs, to guide customers towards what make for ideal purchases.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Dadu also points out that in a post-COVID-19 world, there has been a marked shift in the passenger demographics; today we are seeing a younger, less affluent audience. Even as this youthful cohort of digital natives tends to seek variety and options online, given that a large portion of this audience segment is given to aspirational spending, there is also much demand for experiential formats, which allow one to try the product before completing a purchase.

“Airport operators are becoming more cognizant of changing consumer preferences, and allocating more floor space to retailers. In recent times, many brands have created pop-up stores for promotional purposes, giving travellers a chance to try their offerings while at the airport, or introduced walkthrough formats that allow waiting passengers to get a taste of the brand's offerings first-hand,” he says.

With the aviation industry grow-

ing, and India witnessing more fliers, Saha also adds that there are purchases made in the 90-minute window that exists after checking in and boarding your flight. “Customers are fine walking and browsing stores, and the better experience they get also means that the greater the chance that they will buy a product,” he says.

The rapid expansion of the aviation industry in India presents remarkable opportunities for the growth of airport retailing. With evolving consumer preferences and an increasingly younger and aspirational demographic, retailers must adapt their strategies to deliver unique and experiential shopping experiences to passengers. Despite the challenges posed by strict security regulations and the need to acquire multiple licenses, the rewards of successfully establishing retail spaces in airports are immense.

By focusing on customizing product offerings, maximising space utilization, and enhancing the overall shopping experience, retailers can capitalize on this booming market. As airport operators become more aware of the changing preferences, they are allocating more space and opportunities for retailers to innovate and connect with customers. This trend not only contributes to the economic growth of the country but also establishes Indian airports as global retail destinations. 😊

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DRIVING GROWTH AND PROFITABILITY IN RETAIL: A DATA-LED APPROACH

Kavitha Rao, Managing Director and Lead – Retail, Accenture, talks of the challenges and opportunities in the retail industry; the importance of leveraging technology; and the role played by organisations like Accenture in enabling retailers to take the next steps in India's retail revolution

A S THE LEAD FOR RETAIL AT ACCENTURE IN INDIA, WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES YOU SEE RETAILERS FACING IN TODAY'S MARKET, AND HOW DO YOU HELP THEM ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES?

The retail industry in India, which is the third largest in the world, is growing at a rapid pace, of a CAGR of about 13 per cent, which is twice that of the global retail industry. However, this growth opportunity is also coupled with challenges like changing consumer behaviour, uncertain supply chains, lack of trained manpower and macro-economic variables putting pressures on profitability of retailers.

The rapid changes in consumer behaviour have accelerated both during and after the pandemic and



the biggest enabler has been digital adoption by consumers in India; this has necessitated retailers to adapt and evolve to meet the needs of their consumer base. Retailers are at different levels of maturity in their omnichannel transformation jour-

ney. In this context, we have been working with retailers across in enabling their transformation to being an omnichannel retailer, and in turn drive outcomes around brand and revenue growth with a renewed focus on customer experience.

Sourcing and supply chain severely disrupted during the pandemic, aren't yet in a stable place. There is a need to rethink the sourcing approach to find the right balance of local/global sourcing to achieve an optimal cost picture and mitigate risks. In addition, with a change in channel mix on the backdrop of the channel transition, retailers need to review their fulfilment strategies on the last mile. To this end, we work with retailers on various supply chain transformation areas ranging from network design to warehouse strategy to integrated planning, sourcing, and last mile optimisation.

With consumers being cautious in spending, the product offer, pricing approach and promotions need a review. In our work with retailers focused on a customer centric merchandising approach, leveraging data as well as AI/ML models, is helping retailers across the functions of merchandising, marketing and supply chain in both accelerat-

ing growth and profitability.

This is also a good time for retailers to investigate their cost picture and evaluate the need for transformation in both cost of goods sold as well as selling, general and administrative expenses. With sustainability gaining momentum, it has become an important focus area for both consumers and retailers alike – we are helping organisation to traverse from profit to purpose.

WHAT IS YOUR APPROACH TO DRIVING GROWTH AND PROFITABILITY FOR YOUR CLIENTS, AND HOW DO YOU MEASURE SUCCESS IN THESE AREAS?

With a strong focus on driving outcomes, we help companies achieve sustained growth and profitability. Omnichannel transformation is a way for retailers to find new avenues of growth and improve customer experience to further accelerate revenue growth. In addition, our work in merchandising, supply chain and cost transformation help



► **Kavitha Rao, Managing Director and Lead – Retail, Accenture**

retailers further grow as well as improve profitability. Data led transformation has had a huge impact on all three areas of brand, growth, and profitability.

To share a few examples, working in the merchandising space with a grocery retailer, focused on assortment and space planning resulted in a 3 per cent sales uplift, a 20 per cent Stock Keeping Unit (SKU) reduction and a 0.2 per cent increase in gross margin. Another example is our work with a leading department store with over 100 stores. Using our cost transformation approach, focused on multiple areas such as supply chain, store operations, energy usage, rentals, maintenance, advertising, and travel, helped identify 40 different initiatives, re-

“MANY YEARS AGO, A ONE SIZE FITS ALL APPROACH WORKED FOR RETAILERS, BUT WITH CONSUMERS EVOLVING AND ADOPTING DIGITAL IN A BIG WAY, THEY ARE PUSHING RETAILERS FOR A FAR MORE PERSONALISED AND CONVENIENT EXPERIENCE.”

- Kavitha Rao, Managing Director and Lead – Retail, Accenture

sulting in a 6 per cent savings in costs. The programme also created a future-ready organisation through optimisation of the workforce with a focus on customer experience and a reduction in people costs at stores by 16 per cent.

IN WHAT WAYS DO YOU THINK TECHNOLOGY IS TRANSFORMING THE RETAIL INDUSTRY, AND HOW DO YOU HELP YOUR CLIENTS LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE THEIR BUSINESSES?

Technology plays a key role in transforming any business and more so in retail which is heavily influenced by frequent changes in consumer behaviour, a business model that has high complexity be it in terms of millions of SKUs in the product range, multitude of categories, or a large and diverse addressable market. Many years ago, a one size fits all approach worked for retailers, but with consumers evolving and adopting digital in a big way, they are pushing retailers for a far more personalised and convenient experience.


In this context, a strong digital core is fundamental to all other strategic needs of an enterprise. Amplifying the role of technology means shifting from a technology landscape of static, standalone parts to interoperable pieces intentionally integrated and leveraging the cloud. The digital core consists of three lay-

ers – an infrastructure and security layer, a data and AI layer and an application and platforms layer. And building a digital core is not a one-time project. It must be continuous to incorporate new technologies and business capabilities.

Once a strong digital core is in place, the key applications and platforms that can be built on top, can help drive key business outcomes. For example, consumers today seek greater personalisation and convenience; leveraging data and technology, it is possible for retailers to address specific needs across different customer personas and deliver a relevant and personalised experience. In terms of the product offer and pricing, merchandising platforms can help retailers put together a relevant and affordable assortment that meets the needs in a specific catchment. Pricing and markdown algorithms can help prevent unnecessary discounting and at the same time maximise volume growth leading to better profits. Customer centric supply chains which are built with different service and costs levels catering to different customer segments leverage a strong digital core as well as data to improve availability as well as optimise inventory levels. The examples are endless and there is not an area or function in retail today that does not gain from leveraging the right technology solutions.

HOW DO YOU STAY ON TOP OF INDUSTRY TRENDS AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES, AND WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR RETAILERS WHO ARE LOOKING TO INNOVATE AND STAY AHEAD OF THE COMPETITION?

We remain laser-focused on staying close to our clients, advising them how to navigate the challenges and providing the right solutions for long term profitable growth. Our experience and breadth of solutions enables us to help our clients navigate today and succeed in the future.

The retail industry has evolved multi-fold times in the last couple of years. Consumers have driven the change and retailers have adopted the changes to be relevant and we believe the industry has done well to navigate the pandemic. However, the challenge now is to keep adapting continuously. This means it is time for a new retail culture, one of constant reset. It is the time to review the consumer offer, mix of channels, sourcing approach, fulfilment strategy, data as well as people approach to stay relevant and drive growth and profitability. This calls for a total enterprise re-invention with a strong digital core. We believe retailers will need to use technology, including cloud, data, and AI along with new ways of working to build greater resilience and new paths for growth. 



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USING ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE PERSONAL CARE INDUSTRY



Clensta, the innovative personal care and wellness brand, is making waves in the retail industry with its use of advanced technologies and sustainable practices. Himanshu Pathak, the EIR and Founder's Office spokesperson, shares insights on current trends in customer engagement, personalisation strategies, omnichannel marketing, and how Clensta has differentiated itself from other brands. He also discusses how WebEngage has helped Clensta

improve customer journeys and increase conversion rates. Read on to learn more about Clensta's journey to success.

What trends are you seeing in the retail industry in terms of customer engagement to better serve its clients?

Personalisation: Retailers are using data and technology for personalization, such as tailored recommendations and customized promotions. **Seamless omnichannel experiences:** They are invest-

ing in omnichannel technologies like mobile apps and chatbots for an impeccable customer experience.

Sustainability: Retailers are also offering eco-friendly products and promoting sustainable practices in response to growing customer interest.

How have you created personalised experiences for your customers?

We are constantly gathering and analysing customer data such as purchase history, demograph-

ics, and preferences to identify patterns and insights that can be used to create personalised experiences. This entails categorising your customers according to their interests, preferences, and behaviours. The content on our website is then personalised, such as product recommendations, relevant promotions, personalised messages, and personalised landing pages.

What specific omnichannel marketing strategies have you implemented, and how have they impacted business growth?

Clensta employs omnichannel marketing strategies such as Web Push, WhatsApp Marketing, Email Marketing, and WhatsApp Commerce. Clensta's engagement has increased by 28% as a result of these strategies. These strategies

have assisted us in raising brand awareness and increasing customer loyalty.

How has Clensta differentiated itself from other brands?

Despite the proliferation of beauty brands, our primary goal has always been to advance the technologies used in the creation of personal care and wellness products. We developed several technologies, including STAR, CRAN, and PAP, as a result of our collaboration with IIT Delhi, that we use to formulate our products. We are proud to be the only personal care and wellness brand with 25+ patents for our innovative technologies and formulations (few granted). Furthermore, we have pioneered the use of unusual ingredients in our personal care products, such as Red Aloe Vera

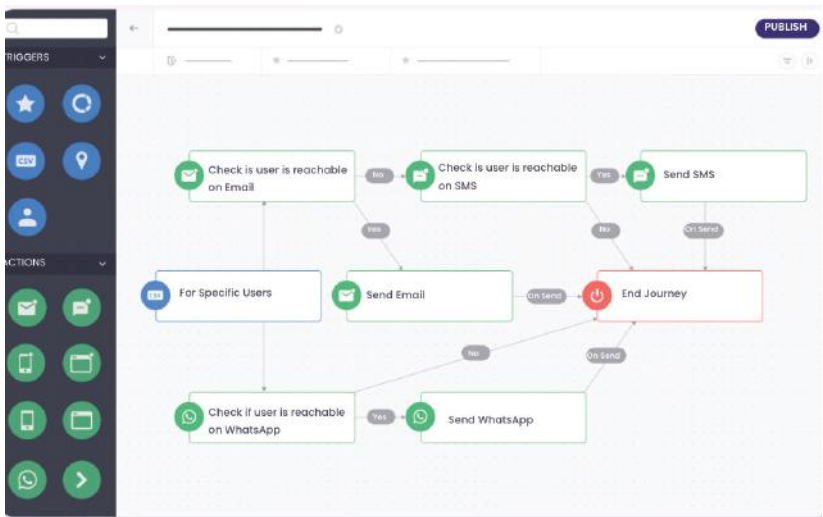


> Himanshu Pathak, EIR and Founder's Office, Clensta

and Egg Protein. For example, we launched India's first-ever warming lotion, which aids in maintaining body temperature during cold winters. We are extremely proud of our achievements and look forward to our future.

How has WebEngage helped you along this journey? Can you share specific examples?

We've been using WebEngage for over a year to constantly improve customer journeys, retargeting them through multiple touch points such as push notifications, email, WhatsApp, or SMS. We have seen a significant increase in conversion rate, with an average 23% increase month on month. It has assisted us in improving our brand recall and lowering our CAC. We've also seen a 10% decrease in cart abandonment. 😊



> A typical WebEngage Dashboard

VENDING 2.0: A NEW ERA OF CONVENIENCE AND EFFICIENCY IN THE GLOBAL RETAIL INDUSTRY

Sandeep Jain, Director and CEO of Empire Industries Limited – Grabbit⁺: Premium Vending Solutions, shares his views and insights for the company he leads. Grabbit⁺ is known to provide premium vending retail solutions along with seamless customer service. Jain sheds light on the progress of his company, the outlook on the retail industry, and the role vending machines play in across the country - both in retail and non-retail setups.

What kind of roadblocks did you encounter when you first began, and how did you overcome them?

Being one of the leaders in any industry comes with challenges. However, as we were backed up by Empire Industries Limited, a century-old conglomerate public limited company, I saw every challenge as an opportunity. We developed expertise in the vending industry but encountered sporadic delays when it came to helping clients envision and install a single snacks vending machine,



establishing and carrying out service standards that adhere to Indian market requirements and obtaining international assistance in order to acquire technologically cutting-edge equipment. With the passage of time, tenacity and the team's dedication, we established a dominant position in the industry, which allowed us to attract more than 1 million corporate users throughout the nation.

We are witnessing a transformation where vending machines have now become an essential component of employee welfare programmes and a convenient way to make refreshments available round the clock. This trans-

formation took place through sustained effort, using our knowledge of technological advancements as well as having an acute understanding of market needs.

What separates you from the rest of the competition?

We are eminent in this industry on the grounds that we are the only vending solutions provider that renders world-class services, from timely preventive and curative maintenance to having best-in-class international vending machines with a wide array of products; 24/7 customer care support with a quick response team; and our very own supply chain.

Sensing the potential for further growth, there has been an influx of many unorganised players, adding volume to the market and installing machines at a lesser price, which eventually puts pressure on their profit and loss and sequentially compels them to provide substandard services. Just by mass-installing vending machines, you cannot contemplate your future place in the industry; there has to be a yield of good services.

I believe this business to be the future of retail, but its growth will only transpire after the vending industry realises the importance of providing best-in-class services to its customers.

What drives you to evolve?

We have a dynamic, discerning, and technologically savvy population that drives demand for goods and consumption trends, which encourages us to keep abreast of all technological advancements and system evolution. We incorporate interactive machines that are US-based and automated in every possible way, allowing the users a fully customised experience.

We use digital platforms to ease the conduct of financial transactions, making it a hassle-free experience.

We spare no effort in devising distinct, yet ideal solutions that

cater to different sectors of the market, such as corporations, the public sector, etc. For instance, we fashioned our operations to be compliant with the COVID guidelines, which furthered the progress of our commitment to our clients. Acknowledging our corporate social responsibility, we operate with gadgets that are energy efficient and contribute to a lesser carbon footprint.

What kind of transformation did you see in your company after the economy was liberated from the pandemic's constraints?

The pandemic created an inflection point that led people to reassess their priorities and needs. The approach to a more sanitary and healthier lifestyle was now being adopted globally, allowing us to make Grabbit⁺ more visible; a fully automated solution with the benefits of touch less and cashless vending was nurtured.

Consumers have been pushed to use digital and contactless payment mechanisms in recent years, allowing us to use digital platforms and make payments via debit or credit cards, UPI, more feasible. We designed our operations to be compliant with the COVID guidelines, which helped us, follow through on our commitment to our clients.

Revolutionary contrivance further on your agenda...



► Sandeep Jain, Director and CEO of Empire Industries Ltd. (Grabbit⁺)

We have launched a fully-automated cafeteria that constitutes the smartest and most modern range of vending machines coupled with a pre-assembled heating unit, putting together a wide array of products consisting of more than 300 variants, making it a game changer for corporate houses and the public sector. As a touchless and cashless experience, Grabbit Cafe also suffices as a hygienic solution that saves real estate costs and operates without human intervention.

This novel contrivance paints the picture of a full-fledged cafeteria that is accessible 24/7. I believe it will set new standards for building a long-term strategic advantage, eventually favoring the entire retail industry and transforming the vending ecosystem. 🤖

CONNECTING CUSTOMERS TO SLOW FASHION AND SUSTAINABLE CLOTHING

Since 1954, K. Bhojraj has a long and well-preserved tradition of pursuing excellence by giving its customers only the best quality sarees at an affordable price. The journey, which started with a store at Triangular Park, has now become an institution. Legacy of Bhojraj today is one of Kolkata's most well-known traditional Indian apparel brands.

Sri Chetan Thakwani, K Bhojraj's grandson and the current chairman, continues this legacy. In this interview, he talks about the handloom industry, how Legacy of Bhojraj has managed to keep competition in check, and what the future holds. Here are some excerpts

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT SOME OF THE LATEST TRENDS IN THE INDIAN HANDLOOM INDUSTRY?

We have been catering to handmade sarees since 3 generations. With our products, our clients have been able to connect with slow fashion & sustainable clothing where people are now able to understand the importance of handicrafts. The



importance of handmade natural dyes used to create colors in the fabric, which is circular, eco-friendly, and helps to recycle fashion.

HOW DO YOU ENSURE THAT THE HANDLOOM PRODUCTS OFFERED BY LEGACY OF BHOJRAJ ARE AF-

FORDABLE FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS, WITHOUT COMPROMISING ON THE QUALITY?

Our ideology from day one i.e. from my grandfather's time is to work with the weaving community directly, eliminating the middle man. This

makes the product; price friendly & quality is directly engaged & kept constant from our end.

HOW DO YOU WORK WITH THE WEAVING COMMUNITY TO BRING THEIR TRADITIONAL DESIGNS TO A GLOBAL AUDIENCE?

That's a time-taking process as working with so many communities from across the country is difficult. But travel is the key. We make it a point to visit each community at least once every 6 months. Our designs are very carefully selected & curated as per the requirements of our clientele base. Remaining work happens through digital connect i.e. WhatsApp & Telecall.

WITH THE INCREASING POPULARITY OF SUSTAINABLE FASHION, HOW HAS LEGACY OF BHOJRAJ ADAPTED TO THIS TREND, AND WHAT INITIATIVES HAVE YOU TAKEN IN THIS DIRECTION?

We never had to adapt to this new trend. We were already there in that space from before because that has been our USP from the very first day of incorporation. We are enjoying this transition in fact, because that motivates us to keep the handwoven community going.

IN YOUR OPINION, HOW IMPORTANT IS CUSTOMER FEEDBACK IN SHAPING THE DIRECTION AND GROWTH OF A BRAND?

Customer comes first. We prioritize customer satisfaction. For that we always tend to establish a personal

touch & each & every sales executive at Bhojraj makes it a point to take care of our customers in store & online also. All our Google reviews are 100% organic. Our order return ratio of the online orders is also less than 2%, which endorses we take customer feedback very seriously.

WITH THE RISE OF E-COMMERCE, HOW HAS LEGACY OF BHOJRAJ ADAPTED TO THIS SHIFT, AND WHAT STRATEGIES HAVE YOU USED TO REACH CUSTOMERS ONLINE?

Yes, the trends of selling have changed in today's time. I.e., apart from our very own Brick & Mortar store located in Kolkata, we are very active in Social Selling through our Facebook & Instagram Page. Furthermore, we have developed our YouTube Channel & now we are on the verge of starting our own e-commerce website. It is not that this opportunity was grabbed upon due to the pandemic. We had envisioned to be in this space since day one of incorporation & just that the pandemic gave us the push to get there & get started.

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT ANY CHALLENGES THAT YOU HAVE FACED IN THE RETAIL INDUSTRY, AND HOW YOU OVERCAME THEM?

Main challenge is Cheap replications that happens with big label brands in the fashion industry, also happens with the handloom industry as well. Product education is the



► Chetan Thakwani, Chairman, Legacy of Bhojraj

key & each Sales person delinquently makes the effort to explain the product & its USP to our clients well. We have Certifications such as Silk Mark for Pure Silk products & would obtain Handloom mark & other necessary certifications in time to gain confidence in our customers for the Genuity in our products.

WHAT IS LEGACY OF BHOJRAJ'S LONG-TERM VISION FOR GROWTH AND EXPANSION?

The idea is always first thing first is to serve the depleting community of handweavers / hand printers. For the same the idea is to get the brand to every household through multiple offline brand stores across the globe & online omni channels so that we can help to grow together. 😊



WHY JOIN RAI

Advocacy Support

RAI makes representations to Central and State Governments and local authorities on critical issues. RAI liaises with the Government, in identified areas for the development of the retail community. As a member, you would have access to the 'Member's Only' section of the website – and be able to participate in collaborative efforts within the community to shape policy.

Guidelines and Standards

RAI disseminates on common guidelines and policies for the sector which would be accessible to Members. These include the National Occupation Standards – developed by RASCI (Retailers Association's Skill Council of India). Other guidelines help in the creation of infrastructure and facilities to improve the retail environment in India.

Networking Meets: As a member you would be invited to participate in Networking Meets held at Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Coimbatore, Kochi and other cities.

You can also:

- Be part of and steer industry committees on aspects such as Supply Chain, Finance, Advocacy, HR, and Technology.
- Attend events, seminars and training programs organised by RAI at member rates. Get access to RAI infrastructure facilities in Mumbai for training activities.
- Receive complimentary copies of STOrai and RAI's daily newsletter – Replenish – which aggregates news, insights and jobs relevant to Indian retail.
- Purchase RAI publications at member rates.
- Receive survey findings, trade information and legislation updates.

**Most importantly, you commit to helping
create a robust retail industry in India.**



Join RAI as

- **Core Member:** Core Membership of RAI is applicable to retailers across sectors. To join as a Core member, a retailer must fulfil the following conditions:

- Issue a tax invoice for every transaction.
- Be registered under Goods and Services Tax (GST).
- Not employ child labour.
- Earn over 50% of the organization's business or INR 100 Crore whichever is less from retail activities.

<u>Turnover</u>	<u>Annual Fee</u>	<u>with 18% GST</u>
Upto Rs 5 crore	Rs 2,500/-	Rs 2,950/-
Rs 5 - 10 crore	Rs 5,000/-	Rs 5,900/-
Rs 10 - 20 core	Rs 10,000/-	Rs 11,800/-
Rs 20 - 50 crore	Rs 15,000/-	Rs 17,700/-
Rs 50 - 300 crore	Rs 25,000/-	Rs 29,500/-
Rs 300 - 500 crore	Rs 35,000/-	Rs 41,300/-
Rs 500 - 1,000 crore	Rs 1,00,000/-	Rs 1,18,000/-
Rs 1,000 - 5,000 crore	Rs 2,00,000/-	Rs 2,36,000/-
Above Rs 5,000 crore	Rs 5,00,000/-	Rs 5,90,000/-

- **Associate Member:** Associate Members are companies that support retail industry. These include retail consultancies, retail hardware and software suppliers (design companies, retail fixture and furniture companies, POS hardware, software, security systems). To be eligible a service provider should:

- Be registered as a company or firm in India.
- Be a supplier, vendor, developer or service provider to retail.
- Be registered under Goods and Services Tax (GST).

Membership fee structure based on the turnover of the company is as follows :

<u>Turnover</u>	<u>One time Joining fee</u>	<u>Annual Fee</u>	<u>with 18% GST</u>
Less than Rs 20 crore	Rs 1 lakh	Rs 10,000/-	Rs 1,29,800/-
More than Rs 20 crore	Rs 2 lakh	Rs 25,000/-	Rs 2,65,500/-

- **Real Estate Member:** Real estate members are companies that develop/manage retail destinations such as malls and shopping centres. To be eligible a company should:

- Be registered as a company or firm in India.
- Be a supplier, vendor, developer or service provider to retail.

<u>Turnover</u>	<u>One time Joining fee</u>	<u>Annual Fee</u>	<u>with 18% GST</u>
Less than Rs 20 crore	Rs 1 lakh	Rs 25,000/-	Rs 1,47,500/-
More than Rs 20 crore	Rs 2 lakh	Rs 1,00,000/-	Rs 3,54,000/-



Join RAI as

- **Affiliate Member:** Affiliate associations are associations/industry bodies that partner with RAI towards promoting exchange of information and pursuing common interests. For instance: NASSCOM, The Federation of Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Clothing Manufacturers Association of India (CMAI), Gems & Jewellery Association of India (GJAI), National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) and All India Footwear Manufacturers & Retailers Association (AIFMRA) are affiliate members of RAI.
- **Academic Member:** Academic membership is valid for one year from signing the agreement. The college/university shall pay Rs. 1, 00,000 (Rs one lakh only) plus 18 % GST to RAI at the time of signing the agreement under the scope of this Agreement as consideration.

To be eligible an institution should:

- a) Be registered as an educational institution or an educational trust in India.
- b) Offer one or more courses in Management/Retail/Design/Visual Merchandising, as part of the curriculum.

Annual Membership fee Rs. 1,00,000 + *18% GST

To know more about RAI membership contact

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Moumita Bhowal, Manager - Membership, +91 8501845810, moumita@rai.net.in (Bengaluru Chapter)

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CORE MEMBERS

- Ace Infocom, Mumbai
- B3 Fashion Studio, Chennai
- Barista Coffee Co. Ltd., Bengaluru
- Burgeon Verticles Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai
- Chennis, Chennai
- Desai Jewellers Pvt. Ltd., Kolkata
- Eco Love Clothing, Pithampur
- Ethic Management Services Pvt. Ltd., Kolkata
- Fresh2day Pvt. Ltd., Chennai
- JMD Enterprises, Raipur
- Kakode Trading Ltd., Goa
- Kathyayinee Foods, Mumbai
- Krishna, Chennai
- Kusum Electrical Corporation, Kolkata
- Laundry King, Kolkata
- Laxmi Medical Stores, Raipur
- Loccitane India Pvt. Ltd., Delhi
- Mithai, Kolkata
- Naiero Retail Pvt. Ltd., Chattishgarh
- Red Rose Super Market, Hyderabad
- Sagar Fashion Art, Jaipur
- Saine Life India LLP, Vadodara
- Sanjay Stainless Steel Works, Mumbai
- Sarda Food and Beverages, Kolkata
- Saundh Retail Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai
- Shubhamay, Bengaluru
- Sundari Silk India, Chennai
- Sweety Jewels Pvt. Ltd., Hyderabad
- Temple The Designer Studio, Chennai
- Tilortech Pvt. Ltd., Hyderabad
- Toto Enterprises, Chennai
- Underdog Athletics India Pvt. Ltd., Delhi
- Vanatantra Beauty Essentials Pvt. Ltd., Bengaluru
- Zarif clothing, Chennai

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

- CMS Info Systems Ltd., Mumbai
- Ecartes Technology Pvt. Ltd., Delhi
- HQTS India, Delhi
- Hughes Sistique Pvt. Ltd., Delhi
- MBH Planning LLP, Delhi
- Onion Insights Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai
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