EX FACTOR
Why employee experience matters

INTERNAL CUSTOMERS FIRST

As a retailer, I often enjoyed thinking about experience. Our team used to constantly strive to create an experience that was above customer expectations (ACE). We used to constantly ask ourselves: How do we deliver ACE experiences? The answer to that could be found looking within (inside the organisation) and looking outside (at customers). The road to delighting external customers is through internal customers. It is great employee experience that ultimately helps create a greater experience for customers.

Each one of us has some good days and some not-so-good days. Together, these experiences define our life experience. In a work environment, the experience that employees go through define their impression about the workplace. And it is the duty of employers to ensure that they create a positive impression by giving a positive work experience.

It is really about EX (employee experience) before CX (customer experience) as CX strategies are pointless unless employees are happy. In this edition of *STOrai*, we highlight different aspects of employee experience—from its impact on business to EX strategies that work. Bringing them all to you are business heads of reputed retail organisations such as Raymond, Kaya, Reliance Digital & Titan.

I want to particularly call attention to two articles: First, the Kaya Middle East case study which illustrates how Diversity and Inclusion are a critical part of today's employee experience; And Second, the article by the HR head of Titan where she speaks about how to ensure a good experience for employees working from home.

The issue also has the amazing growth story of Baazar Style Retail Ltd., a Kolkata-based company that has shown enviable growth in just six years and an article about how BigBasket.com achieves zero-error operations. Happy reading!

Kumar Rajagopalan,
Chief Executive Officer, RAI

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WALMART TO STRENGTHEN PRESENCE IN U. P.

Walmart India plans to open six more 'Best Price' modern wholesale stores in Uttar Pradesh, a senior company official told the media. Walmart already has four stores in the state— two in Agra and one each in Meerut and Lucknow. It also has a fulfilment centre in Lucknow to cater to business needs of small businesses such as kiranas/resellers, offices and institutions besides hotels, restaurants and caterers. The stores are proposed to be set up in Varanasi, Moradabad, Gorakhpur, Allahabad, Kanpur and Aligarh. 😊

BATA PLANS TO FOCUS ON SMALL TOWNS & ADD 500 FRANCHISE STORES IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS

Footwear major Bata India aims to strengthen its presence in the domestic market by adding 500 franchise stores in the next five years, focusing mainly on tier II, III and IV cities. The company has already identified 180 such markets in smaller cities pan-India and is seeking franchisees to expand its presence beyond metros.

"The company is betting big on franchising and already has over 150 franchise stores across the country. Bata plans to open 500 stores in the next 5 years," the statement added.

According to its latest annual report, Bata India has 1,415 stores across India covering 3.07 mn sq ft of retail space. "India is one of the most important markets for Bata globally and we aim to make Bata accessible to the fashion forward customers in tier II-IV smaller cities via franchise stores," said Bata India CEO Sandeep Kataria.

Bata India had revenue of ₹2,928.44 crore in FY 2018-19 and had recorded a net profit of ₹329.66 crore in the said period. 😊

ESR PARTNERS WITH FUTURE GROUP TO INVEST ₹300 CRORE

ESR India Investments Holdings, a subsidiary of Asia Pacific's leading logistics real estate platform ESR, announced a strategic alliance with Future Group through Future Market Networks. It is estimated that an investment of nearly ₹300 crore (approximately $42 million) shall be made to develop two state-of-the-art industrial and warehousing parks to service the northern and central regions. This collaboration is aimed to set new standards for the warehousing and industrial real estate sector and benefit from the burgeoning e-commerce growth in these regions. The two sites, with a total area of approximately 75 acres and a developable area of approximately 1.3 million sq. ft., will be jointly developed by Future Group's Future Market Networks and ESR, with ESR as the majority partner.

V-MART RETAIL TO CREATE 2000 MORE JOBS

Leading value fashion and lifestyle products retailer V-Mart Retail plans to invest ₹115 crore by the end of March 2020 for expansion. V-Mart, which primarily operates in tier II, III and IV cities and follows a cluster-based model approach to expand, plans to add 60 more stores to create a network of 275 outlets by the end of March 2020. Since April this year, it has opened 20 new stores and currently operates 233 outlets in 18 States and Union Territories of India.

"We plan to invest ₹115 crore in opening new stores, to enhance our back-end support and in strengthening our manpower. We are also planning to add 2000 more employees to our existing team," V-Mart's chairman and managing director Lalit Agarwal told PTI.

MINISO CLAIMS ITS INDIAN CENTURY

Japanese designer lifestyle brand MINISO celebrated the achievement of the breakthrough 100 stores in India. The company has been operating in India for the last two years and has 106 stores across 43 Indian cities. Owing to the splendid response towards its low prices and quality products, it has continued to add newer categories to their portfolio - manufacturing some in India itself.

Speaking on this landmark achievement, Tyron Li, General Manager India for MINISO said, "Our perspective towards India has changed over our course of being here. Our vision is to now explore strategic business partnerships within the country that would help us in producing goods at competitive prices. This would enable us to manufacture certain merchandise in India and then export to other countries. We are now looking to streamline the supply chain resources of the group — with a keen focus on developing local direct mining resources. We strongly believe that this would prove to be beneficial to both the consumers and the franchise owners".

CELIO LAUNCHES 50TH STORE

French menswear brand Celio announced the opening of its 50th store at Patna. Located at Dumraon Palace, Frazer Road, Patna the store is spread across approximately 800 sq. ft. "We are excited on reaching this milestone in the country. We believe that exclusive brand stores are a significant part of our growth strategy. With the launch of our latest store in Patna, we aim to make French fashion accessible and available to all the male consumers in the city," said Satyen Momaya, CEO, Celio Future Fashion India about the launch.

SHOPPERS OKAY TO PAY FOR CARRY BAGS AT RETAIL OUTLETS: REPORT

As per community platform LocalCircles, 83% of consumers polled said a charge for carry bag served as a reminder for them to carry their own bag. As many as 69% of those polled always carry a bag while 25% carry a bag sometimes. In most instances, consumers do not carry their own bag because they forget to do so. However, 62% of shoppers said they keep a bag in their vehicle when they go shopping while some keep a bag near their kitchen door.

NEWS IN NUMBERS

6%

What is it?

The share of online shoppers that prefer mobile wallets over other forms of payment, according to a 2019 report by BigCommerce.

Why is it important?

It shows how mobile payments are inching closer to market domination.

Tell me more

Mobile sessions account for 59 percent of all sessions on e-commerce sites. Gen Z and millennial shoppers are twice as likely to complete an online purchase using a mobile wallet than the average consumer.

1 out of 2

What is it?

The number of millennials that say they would take a pay cut to find work that resonates with their values as per The Deloitte Millennial Survey.

Why is it important?

This shows that the millennial employee is someone who cares about brand values more than money.

Tell me more

Most millennial employees look for jobs with growth opportunities, skill development programmes, flexible working, an inclusive and diverse environment, good policies and sustainable development goals.

63%

What is it?

Percentage of consumers who order online as they find stores as crowded as public transport during rush hour, finds Capgemini.

Why is it important?

It reveals consumer preference: they hate crowds.

Tell me more

59% of consumers buy items online when they need them rather than waiting until the weekend to buy in store. Over half of the consumers (55%) will switch to a competitor if they get a faster service.

WALMART'S MEXICO UNIT TAKES ON AMAZON

Walmart Inc's Mexico unit now offers delivery within three hours for certain home and tech products ordered online, a step that puts it head on with its e-commerce rival Amazon.com Inc.

The new service from Walmart de Mexico applies to about 12,000 products within certain dimensions delivered within Mexico, including laptops, cell phones, televisions and clothing irons. This year, Walmart opened two distribution centres for e-commerce in Mexico, Walmart's largest overseas market by store count, in its push to boost logistics and compete with Amazon.

STARBUCKS AND ALIBABA LAUNCH VOICE ORDERING AND DELIVERY

Starbucks is taking another step toward evolving the digital experience for customers in China by launching voice ordering and delivery capabilities within Alibaba's smart speaker—Tmall Genie. Customers can now order their favourite Starbucks beverages and food simply by using their voice for delivery within 30 minutes. Leveraging Alibaba's on-demand food delivery platform, Ele.me, the voice ordering capabilities for Starbucks further extend the customer experience within Starbucks digital ecosystem. The launch of the new service marks the one-year anniversary of Starbucks and Alibaba's strategic partnership.

NIKE ALTERS DISTRIBUTION STRATEGY

Nike, in a bid to retain tighter control of its brand power while also improving gross margins, has altered its distribution strategy to focus more on growing its direct to consumer channels. It has increased the minimum annual amount retailers need to spend to continue receiving wholesale Nike products. Moreover, it intends to end its supply agreements with independent retailers over the next two years. This move is a part of Nike's growth plan, Triple Double Strategy (2X), announced in 2017, that seeks to double its "cadence and impact of innovation," double its speed to market and double its "direct connections" with consumers. Nike is now moving towards this by changing its distribution strategy. Reducing the volume of retailers selling Nike products will enable the company to funnel sales through its own website and network of stores.

As part of its growth plan, Nike aims to generate 50% of its sales through its own stores and e-commerce platforms. It will also help the brand retain control of the relationship between itself and its consumers. It will help Nike to not only protect its brand value by giving customers a consistent shopping experience but also help boost profits and margins. In fact, by cutting out the middleman Nike's gross margins rose to a healthy 44.7% last year.

PUNJAB RENEWS 365 DAYS' STORE OPENING PERMISSION

Taking the submission by RAI into consideration, the State Government of Punjab has renewed the notification allowing stores to remain open 365 days in the state. The renewed notification is valid up to 2020.

FSSAI INVITES RAI TO SUPPORT EAT RIGHT CAMPUS

Shri Pawan Kumar Agarwal, CEO - FSSAI invited a delegation from RAI to attend a meeting regarding the Eat Right Campus initiated by the Government of India to encourage Businesses to make safe, healthy and hygienic food available within the organization's campus. The honourable CEO urged all retailers and members of RAI to participate in the 'Eat Right India Movement.'

DPIIT INVITES RAI TO BE PART OF NATIONAL TRADERS' WELFARE BOARD

The DPIIT has constituted the National Traders' Welfare Board (NTWB) to make recommendations on problems and issues faced by small traders and to suggest measures to reduce compliance burden of traders and to improve access to funds to traders. RAI has been invited to be a member of the NTWB.

GST CIRCULAR ON POST SALES DISCOUNTS RESCINDED

The GST Council, in its 37th meeting held on 20th September 2019, has rescinded the GST circular no. 105/24/2019 dated 28.06.2019 on various post-sales discounts issued by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs. Earlier, RAI had submitted a representation and had several meetings with the GST Council to highlight the practical difficulties in compliance and recommended reconsidering the circular.

RAI SUBMITS REPRESENTATION TO TELANGANA GOVT. FOR SALE OF LIQUOR IN HYPERMARKETS

RAI has submitted a representation to the Government of Telangana to formulate a policy in the upcoming State Excise Policy 2019 for Hypermarkets. It has requested the policy be in line with the Excise Policy formulated by Andhra Pradesh to establish elite shops in hypermarkets and encourage the selling liquor at M.R.P, setting a new trend of walk-in liquor stores.

MAHARASHTRA REVISES HIKE IN MINIMUM WAGES

The State Government of Maharashtra had issued a notification revising minimum rates of wages in the state of Maharashtra for skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled labour in the state w.e.f. 24th July 2019. RAI submitted a representation to the State Government explaining the impact of such a steep rise in minimum wages. On representation by RAI and various other associations, the Special Allowance payable to the Scheduled Employment in Shop or Commercial Establishment in Maharashtra has been revised.

LOCAL SOURCING NORMS FOR SINGLE BRAND RETAIL RELAXED

RAI had submitted a recommendation to the Central Government to relax mandatory sourcing norms for Single Brand Retail Trading (SBRT). The government has recently relaxed the rules requiring 30 per cent local sourcing. The local sourcing will not be year-on-year, but instead considered as five-year blocks, which is expected to provide greater flexibility and ease of operations. Furthermore, all procurements including global sourcing made from India by the single brand retail entity for the brand shall be counted as local sourcing.

Natural Indulgence

BRIDGING GAP BETWEEN QUALITY AND ASPIRATION

Natural indulgence: A Distribution platform for international cosmetic brands (Personal care & Hair care)

OGX beauty pure and simple | Petal Fresh PURE | BEAUTY FORMULAS | HERBAN COWBOY | Jacklon | MILLIONAIRE | HotIce DEODORANT BODY SPRAY Choose your body | Louis Cardin | SO BIO | BYPHASSE | Rudy since 1920

CX IS EX

Exploring the positive correlation between Customer Experience and Employee Experience, the Reliance Digital way

Walt Disney once said, "Whatever you do, do it well. Do it so well that when people see you do it, they will want to come back and see you do it again, and they will want to bring others and show them how well you do what you do."

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

We live in interesting times — 'Age of the Consumer' — empowered buyers demand a new level of customer obsession. In today's increasingly competitive global economy, it is not enough to simply offer a good value or a great product, it is all about delivering exceptional customer experience to SAY (share their experience with others), STAY (engage with your business with repeat visits) and SPEND (get excited about their experience to buy your products or use your services).

The competition is not about product and price, but essentially about the differentiated customer experience (CX). Competitive edge can be established through the organisation's ability to consistently deliver an exceptional customer experience.

What leads to an exceptional customer experience? Today's customers expect personalised service that empowers them to take informed decisions. They expect end-to-end solutions from retailers. The way an employee serves the customer sets the stage for a continued association with that customer. To achieve sustained growth, businesses need to create engaged teams to link success to customer engagement.

CX = EX

CX can be a game-changer. Employee Experience (EX) is an enabler for delivering exceptional CX, consistently. It is the people who make a difference in one's experience and engage customers in an emotional transaction with the business. Hence, engaged employees are perceived to be more productive and more customer-focused, adding more to the bottom line. They are also more likely to withstand temptations of leaving the organisation.

In the 1990s, US-based Sears Corporation adopted a model to enhance employee engagement to build a compelling place for its staff to work, a compelling place for the customers to shop, thereby making it a compelling place for shareholders to invest. Inspired by this model,

one of India's large electronics retailers, Reliance Digital, implemented a series of people development interventions to live its vision of 'Personalizing Technology' by consistently delivering 'differentiated experience' to its people and customers. The underlying aim was to give individualised attention to customers to drive an emotional connection with them. This was, of course, singularly possible only through employees.

The personalisation rested on the foundation of the attitude of employees towards their job and the company. Emotionally engaged employees expect the organisation to invest in building their capabilities, providing them career growth, rewarding and recognising their contributions and empowering them to passionately deliver an exceptional experience to their customers.

Engaged employees say positive things about their work and workplace, stay with the organisation and strive to put in additional efforts to make a positive impact on their customers. They provide personalised solutions and service to their customers and help the organisation to maintain a continued relationship with its customers.

MOMENTS THAT MATTER

A differentiated employee experience is about all aspects of work, workplace, and workforce experience. Employees, like customers, prefer every touch point of their life cycle with their organisation to be emotionally connected—right from their hiring interviews to exit interviews. Employee expectations, needs and wants are to be aligned with organisational design of customer expectations, needs and wants.

The Reliance Digital team embraced Design Thinking to capture the moment that matters to their employees. It helped the team to study, listen and learn what employees are doing every day and discover new ways to simplify their work and improve productivity, performance, and engagement. The focus was on developing employee personas, which the employees could use to develop journey maps for themselves.

To turn this design thinking process into actionable results, the team then segmented the workforce into three Stakeholder groups—employees, customers and business leaders. Next, a set of more than 20 customer oriented 'moments that matter' was developed for each of these three segments. These 'moments' were developed as personal statements, such as "enabling me to be successful in a new role," "ability

to understand needs and wants of my customer," "responding to the queries of my customers," "reinforcing my impact through continuous learning, feedback and development," "aligning my growth with the success of my organisation," and "knowing where I stand and that my perspectives are valued." Through these 'moments,' the HR team started working to create simple, integrated, customer centric people programs, processes and tools.

The broader themes of customer centric people initiatives undertaken to enhance EX were:

1. **Shared Purpose and Shared Mindset:** Efforts were taken to seek answers to questions such as: How do you want the customer experience to be, at the emotional level? What do you stand for and why do you exist? Are we all aligned to serv-

ing our customers? The random responses to these questions helped the team to align every employee to Reliance Digital's organisational vision of 'Personalizing Technology'. The roadmap to achieve the vision involved delivering differentiated experience to customers and employees.

2. **Understanding the Customers:** Attempts were made to get a deep understanding of the needs, wants and expectations that were key to creating personalised customer interactions.

3. **Collaborative Culture:** Employees were encouraged to convey and express their ideas with the leadership and with each other in a way that could be clearly understood. They engaged in open and passionate debates for ideas and opinions.

4. **Differentiated Workforce for Personalising Service:** A dynamic workforce plan was implemented. Differentiated profiling of employees in alignment with the targeted customer personas, built a diverse and ready talent pool. Enhanced hiring and selection process ensured that the quality of resources was not compromised.

5. **Empowered Resources to Deliver an Exceptional Customer Experience:** A personalised on-boarding program, which consisted of a series of continuous learning interventions, enabled employees to engage with customers. It also helped build their skills and capabilities to complete day-to-day tasks with a clear understanding of the purpose and how each one of them was contributing to the 'big picture'. It helped customers to take informed decisions and provided them with end-to-end solutions. Further, Personalised Leadership Developmental interventions were introduced to continuously develop the functional, behavioural and leadership competencies of people leaders.

6. **Wealth Creators for Self and Organisation:** An integrated career growth framework was put in place that enabled employees to learn and grow. This helped them manage their

performance and get rewarded for their efforts. The reward policies like incentives and remuneration were aligned with customer experience metrics.

7. **Employee Experience:** Engagement was restricted to the requirements of their jobs or technical aspects of their job, but to the extent of engaging with the quality of service. It did not restrict to celebrations alone but were based on four dimensions of:

a. **Recognise** – Employee recognition for demonstration of values and competence.

b. **Celebrate** – Celebration of small wins, cultural events and unstructured fun@work programs.

c. **Learn and Share** – Learning from each other through collaborative learning initiatives and embracing pull-based learning culture

d. **Communicate** – Transparent and clear communication with employees making them engaged and aligned with the vision and mission of the business, thereby helping build trust in leadership and on the shared purpose.

MEASURE WHAT MATTERS

Measuring engagement levels of employees and customers provides a business with an opportunity to work towards increasing overall experience of both customers and employees. The approach and methodology need not necessarily be different for customers and employees. The metric helps refine the process continuously and enhances the levers which impacts experience.

Reactive to Proactive: Reactive approach involves turning a poor experience into a great one by having a mechanism to manage complaints, queries and concerns of customers and employees. Proactive approach signifies having a platform to measure the experience like Voice of Employee (VoE) and Voice of Customer (VoC). It is an outcome-focused approach to measure NPS (Net Promoter Score) of EX and CX with real-time feedback of employees and customers. There exist various approaches to measure initiatives that are linked to input and output, like service quality audits, diagnostic surveys, audits of expected standards, focused group discussions, stay interviews and exit interviews among others.

Some retailers also implement an approach called 'Human Sigma', which is a disciplined approach that starts by accepting human nature and then use it to measure, manage, and improve the performance of the customers and employees to drive financial performance. Businesses that achieve Human Sigma have an average financial performance that is 3.4 times higher than businesses that rank in the bottom half on both measures.

EXPERIENCE MATTERS

Let us commit ourselves to making our retail businesses an engaging place to work for our internal customers, an exciting place to shop for our external customers and a rewarding business for our shareholders.

Ultimately, employees will deliver a Customer Experience that resonates with their own experience in the organisation. So, employee experience matters. 👨‍💼

Jeeva Balakrishnan is a strategic business HR partner with more than two decades of experience across Retail/Fashion/Lifestyle, Manufacturing and Consulting Electronics Retail business (CDIT). He is currently VP-HR at Reliance Market- Cash and Carry business of Reliance Retail Limited. He holds a Post Graduate degree in HRM from Madurai Institute of Social Sciences and is also certified in Strategic Human Resources Management from IIM-A. Jeeva is a certified Executive Coach from CFI.

THEY GROW, WE GROW

Mohit Dhanjal, Business Head - Shirting (B2C), Raymond Ltd. makes a compelling business case for companies, especially retail businesses, to focus on Employee Experience (EX)

To win in the marketplace, you must first win in the workplace—goes a quote by New York Times best-selling author and keynote speaker Douglas R. Conant that makes a business case for focusing on employees. Today, employees communicate, connect, collaborate, and share knowledge in unprecedented ways, creating entirely new ways of working. Apart from communication, technology plays a key role in making sure that employees are empowered, engaged, and managed the way they should.

A strategy, no matter how in-depth can never be executed without the employees driving it with passion and grit, which makes it imperative to focus on their welfare at work. However, the process of employee experience is an ongoing one. It is constantly evolving each day, depending on factors that are fundamentally out of our control in this VUCA world. That is why a mindset bent on 'solving' a problem or constellation of issues might not be the solution to approach employee experience. It is best approached with a growth / winning mindset.

Just as marketers work to understand the Customer Experience (Mind Maps) at various touch-points across the customer journey, companies are now actively creating Employee Journey maps. These outline the steps employees go through in their life-cycles in order to address the goals, pain points and required actions at each step, leading to the "Moments that matter"/ "Moments of Truth."

In sum, Employee Experience (EX) and Customer Experience (CX) are two sides of the coin. In today's era of driving 'Customer Centricity', the Employee experience is hugely rooted in the customer experience management including a series of activities such as Work environment, Culture, HR services and Employee engagements / events. The approach needs to be 'Holistic'.

Sharing some thoughts on delivering employee Experience (EX)

◆ Elevate: Place them in positions where they can utilize their skills & strengths and nurture them to develop their leadership skills

◆ Engage: Encourage them to share their ideas, suggestions and feedback

♦ Empower: Give them autonomy to take decisions

♦ Recognise: Appreciate their efforts and contributions & provide them with right opportunities

♦ Develop: Set goals that are realistic but would also expand their performance threshold

♦ Equip: Provide them with relevant training & tools

♦ Energise: Inspire them to develop new capabilities, broadening their horizon

♦ Support: Mentor and coach them for holistic development

For us at Raymond it's all about the big picture that ties together all our efforts to attract, engage and develop our employees.

While customers are at the heart of everything we do, our employees are our heart beats. I strongly believe that employees can and will only deliver experiences to customers that they experience themselves. ☺

Mohit Dhanjal has over two decades of experience in hospitality, telecom, FMCG & apparel industries. He is credited with crafting a new, agile and asset-light business model for entrepreneurial franchisees through Raymond's new retail format called Mini TRS.

THE BEAUTY OF AN
INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

Implementing a well-thought out Diversity & Inclusion Programme has a positive impact on employee experience and business. A Kaya Middle East case study

By Nivedita Nanda
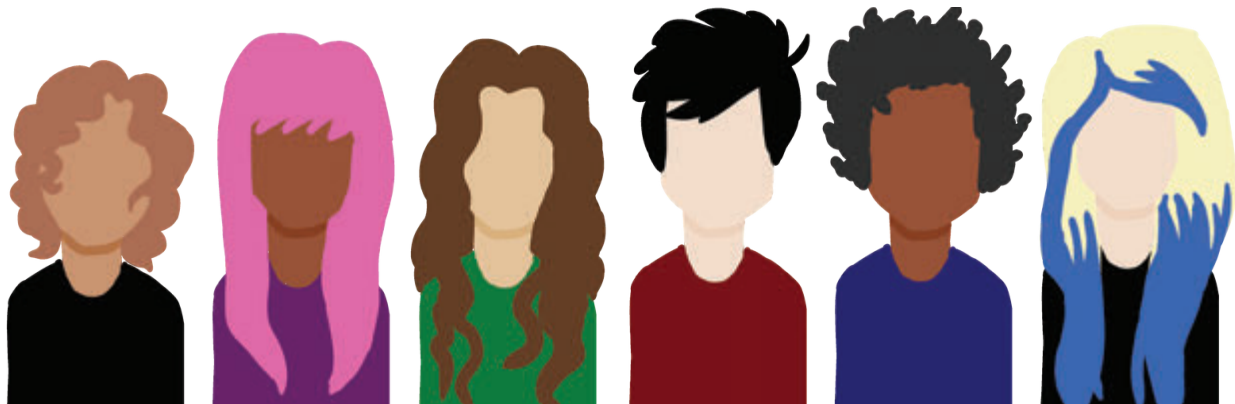
By the year 2025, 75% of the global workforce will be made up of millennials, which means this group will occupy the majority of leadership roles over the coming decade. They will be responsible for making important decisions that affect workplace cultures and people's lives. This group has a unique perspective on diversity. The 2018 Deloitte Millennial Survey shows that 74% of these individuals believe their organization is more innovative when it has a culture of inclusion. If businesses are looking to hire and sustain a millennial workforce, diversity must be a key part of the company culture. At Kaya, the average age of employees

is 31 years and our business model is based on innovation, service quality and customer service. Although we run a very robust Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) programme, its best showcased at Kaya Middle East.

D&I @ KAYA MIDDLE EAST

At Kaya Middle East, we deal with customers from diverse cultures. As our business demands high level of customer service and innovation, multi-cultural customer service requires recognising that our customer's needs and expectations may vary across cultures. Providing the same quality service to all customers frequently means adapting our personal delivery style and usual business practices to meet indi-

vidual customer's needs. The D & I programme which involves hiring employees from diverse cultures and orientations has helped us in achieving high level of service quality and customer service.

To make the programme a success, we have a strong orientation programme for our employees. We also have a buddy programme that has helped us create an LGBT network, which is a powerful way for people to come together and share experiences and learn. That has led to positive changes in our company policies, as well as opportunities for mentoring, networking, and career progression for individual employees belonging to the LGBT community.

However, simply having a policy isn't enough. It is important to make sure that the organisation is clear about what is acceptable behaviour at the workplace and what isn't, and establish procedures for dealing with those who violate the policies.

The good news is that many of the steps we've looked at aren't expensive or difficult to implement. Things like supporting events, tweaking our recruitment strategies and creating employee networks require some time and commitment, but they're within the reach of any business, large or small.

BRINGING CLARITY

Yet, some executives are still not clear in the ways and extent D & I is impacting our organisation. They question how D & I assists in meeting specific organizational, corporate and business unit objectives. To help them get a greater understanding, we communicate and coach them by creating certain frameworks and implementing practices and policies. We also sensitize our people on how we can leverage our D & I programme to help achieve our business goal. With organisational will, and effort our programme has met success, thanks to the framework we put in place and followed.

THE D&I FRAMEWORK

Developed a Strong Structure and policies around Implementation: A lot of the things in the initiative or policy can be holistic and grassroots within the company. Our D& I initiative is successful as we have a buy-in have from senior leaders. This enabled us to do a lot of inexpensive or even free initiatives with the support of the leadership team, which then cascaded down through the organization. This structure also ensured there are enough resources to accomplish the tasks, and that does not remain an HR-only agenda, keeping people at all levels involved and engaged. Moreover, it made sure that all activities are linked and aligned with the strategic framework.

Created a comprehensive learn-

▷ At Kaya Middle East, diversity and inclusion are part of the team's DNA

ing strategy for employees at all levels: Launching a D&I initiative is like deciding to adopt a child. One needs to sensitize everyone in the family. At Kaya, we have sensitivity awareness seminars across the organization, for employees at all levels. There is a structured Orientation Programme for every role. Every person goes through mandatory induction that includes developing skills and Organization Culture among other things.

Implemented the overall strategy to form the framework of the process: An important discussion when one launches a D&I programme is about its impact on the business and the NPS score. To ensure a positive outcome, we avoided piecemeal activities that are not tied to business strategy. We ensured that the strategy includes workforce, workplace and customers. The workforce consists of those who provide the organization's core products and services to the customers. The workplace consists of the culture, policies, procedures and practices that can have a positive or negative impact on the workforce's ability to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse customer base. Basically, we created a strong business case around the programme.

Included a comprehensive communication plan in the overall strategy: Often D & I is the best-kept secret. Many organisations create a D & I newsletter while others include

Strategies for a Multi-Cultural Approach

- **Develop key leadership traits**
  - **Recognise individual differences**
- **Give feedback sensitively**
- **Encourage cross cultural awareness**

D & I related articles in existing communication pieces. We treat everyone equally and have created an atmosphere wherein each member feels at ease to operate without any apprehension.

RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

Although we have tried to adapt with the emerging paradigm of diversity management and to create a cultural synergy at the work place, there is still room for improvement. Managing diversity itself is a complex phenomenon and we are yet

to implement it in Kaya India. For that we need further cross-cultural training and workshops to develop the diversity skills of the workforce. Similarly, diversity trainers and HR managers need to handle this sensitive issue with due diligence.

Adopting D& I has improved our organization's alevel of adaptability. It has strengthened our ability to provide excellent service to diverse audiences, and ultimately has inspired our employees to think beyond their own realities and push their boundaries. 😊

Nivedita Nanda is Group CHRO, Kaya Ltd. She started her career as Pilot Officer with the Indian Air Force and then moved to the corporate world. Prior to Kaya, she headed HR for Future Retail. She has also worked as Group HR Head at Prime Focus Ltd.; Chief People Officer at Reliance Health & Reliance Energy and Praxair Ltd. Nivedita holds an MBA in HR from Jamnalal Bajaj Institute of Management Studies and a Masters in Psychology from Utkal University.

HAPPY HOME WORK

Mantras to ensure a good employee experience for remote teams or staff members working from home

By Priya M Pillai

Thanks to technology, working from home is becoming increasingly easier than ever before. More and more companies offer flexible commuting policies, which have become an important criterion in Employer Brand Value proposition. With strides in telecommuting and flexible in-office hours, many employees can achieve work-life balance as they reclaim time they would've spent in traffic. Businesses can widen their talent searches when the workforce is not limited to a small geographic region.

The work from home option is going beyond the Information Technology industry to customer services. While there are industries that lend themselves very well to remote working, in retail the scope is limited, largely because of the nature of the industry.

One of the biggest negatives of remote work continues to be the feeling of isolation and disconnectedness. Engaging and motivating remote workers is not complicated. Most of the methods we use to inspire in-house employees can be applied to employees working from home as well.

COMMUNICATE

A platform for effective communication is key to ensuring they are included in all business discussions and decisions. Make meetings inclusive. This will help them feel they're part of a larger organisation and that the organisation has a vested interest in their relationship.

Communicate when necessary, then leave the remote employees alone to do their job, else the purpose of remote working will fail.

RECOGNISE

Regularly make an effort to recognise your team members for their achievements, and make sure you include remote employees in it as well. It is equally important to make recognition highly visible so that other members of the organisation are aware of the valuable contributions remote workers are making. You'll likely find that team members feel motivated to work harder in the hopes they'll eventually get the recognition they're seeing others get.

EQUIP

One of the pain points for remote employees is their inability to manage their time effectively. They may struggle with scheduling focused work time into their day with the household chores. Providing tools and training that can help remote

workers better manage their time is a great motivator. It shows that the management cares and gives them resources to help with their path to success.

SET EXPECTATIONS

Clarity of goals and direction, which are mutually agreed upon, helps in making this arrangement a success. Setting expectations motivates the remote workers. Follow this up with frequent feedbacks through one-on-one meetings. For this, use technology (like video-conferencing) if necessary.

UPDATE

In-house employees know and understand the workflow processes. However, it is not the same with remote workers. They don't have the same feed of information or updates on workflows (or changes in workflows). Giving remote employees continual access to mission and vision statements, project updates, company performance records, etc. helps remote workers understand how their role contributes to the company's overall success, resulting in more engaged employees.

NURTURE CULTURE

A recent Harvard Business Review article addressed the importance of developing company culture with remote employees in order to foster engagement. This can be a difficult thing to do when communicating virtually. The article suggests that in order to nurture culture, you first

⊳ It is important to meet remote workers periodically

have to build trust. One good way to accomplish this is to bring team members together on a frequent basis. By including remote workers in company meetings and other events on a regular basis, a common thread of culture is more easily shared by all.

MEET

Remote workers can often feel left out. Meeting them one-on-one will help managers learn about what is going on with them. In case of in-house employees you are able to notice their moods and understand their situations and offer words of encouragement. Remote employees don't enjoy the same kind of working conditions, and as such, efforts must be made to spend time getting to know them.

MAKE IT WORK

The work flexibility trend is sweeping across the country. From healthcare to communications to tech to service, each industry offers roles that can be executed from the com-

fort of one's home. The best way to manage remote staff is to have an agreed-upon process, an established time to talk and a check-in system to hold all members (including managers) accountable for work. Being successful with remote staff members requires planning and tools.

My advice to organisations is to first assess the organisation's readiness to adopt a remote working policy. Then identify roles that can be effectively performed remotely. Once this is done, create an ecosystem that will support the system—this is a critical success factor. Managers play a crucial role in making this a success too. ☺

Priya M Pillai heads Retail and Corporate HR at Titan Industries Ltd. She has over two decades of experience working with global brands. She has spent a large part of her career in the retail service industry like Unilever, Titan; Mahindra Retail, and managed varied portfolios from sales, operations, human capital to heading the E-commerce business. She aspires to continue building businesses and brands in the consumer space.

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DEPARTMENT STORES & MALLS | SPECIALITY STORES
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TECHTONIC SHIFTS

Technocrats and retailers shared ideas about the role of leadership in retail technology and the changing dynamics of the business at Retail Technology Conclave 2019

Businesses have had to rethink their relationship with consumers at every stage of the buying cycle—from discovery, transaction right up to post-purchase engagement. Whether they realise it or not, most organisations in today's connected economy are already going through some kind of a tech-driven transformation. What's required for companies to thrive in this connected age is a leadership that understands change and embraces it. Technology and Leadership are undoubtedly the two pillars of business transformation, and were therefore the focus of Retail Technology Conclave (ReTechCon) 2019.

Themed Technology Driven Leadership - The Algorithm of Success, ReTechCon 2019 was designed to help retailers understand the rapid changes in technology and adapt to them, for the benefit of their businesses as well as consumers.

The dynamic array of speakers at ReTechCon 2019 included, Keshav R. Murugesh, Chairman, NASSCOM; Rakesh Biyani, Joint Managing Director, Future Retail Limited; Vineet Gautam, Country Head, Bestseller Retail India Pvt. Ltd. (Vero Moda, Jack & Jones, Only); Ranjit Satyanath, Head—Technology Ops, Infiniti Retail Limited, Croma - A TATA Enterprise; Vikram Idnani, Head - IT, Reliance Retail Ltd.; Vishal Kapil,

CTO, Marks and Spencer Reliance India Ltd., and Vinod Kapote - Head - IT, Trent Ltd., Rajiv Nair - CEO, Kaya Ltd., Sandeep Mistry - Head – IT; Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Ltd. – Pantaloons; Abhimanyu Lal, Chief Product Officer & Business Head, Pepperfry; Vivek Kapoor, Co-Founder, Dineout; Kiran Komatla, Sr. VP - IT, Burger King India Pvt. Ltd.; Pooraan Jaiswal, Group CTO, TBZ (Tribhovandas Bhimji Zaveri Ltd.), among others.

Various critical aspects of retail technology were touched upon during discussions on topics like:

♦ Customer Experience: The Competitive Advantage

Special Address

▷ Keshav Murugesh, Chairman – NASSCOM; Group CEO - WNS Global Services

Presentation

▷ Raj Raguneethan, Regional Business Leader, Retail & Consumer Goods Microsoft Corporation, Asia

Presentation

▷ Sauvik Banerjee, Tata Group Technology and Digital Leadership

♦ Tech-Driven Innovation: Powering Business, Enabling Growth

♦ Digital Retail Transformation: Successful Customer Experience Strategy through Technology

♦ Omni-channel Retail: Cross-Channel Strategies that Work for Customer Delight

♦ Unlocking Supply Chain Potential for Speed, Transparency & Reliability

♦ Future Focus: Rethinking Retail with RPA, AI and ML

♦ New Age Marketing – Beyond Discounts: Personalised, Engaging, Digital

On both the days, Microsoft, the presenting partner for ReTechCon 2019, conducted special workshops for top business leaders and IT heads on the Next Generation in Customer Experience.

The first day of the conclave culminated into the ReTech Start-up Awards 2019, which recognise start-ups that are set to change the fabric of business with their unconventional ideas.

10 short-listed applicants presented their unique business ideas to the Grand Jury, comprising Ashwin Khasgiwala, Director - Reliance Brands Limited and Chief Operations Controller, Reliance Retail Ltd; K Radhakrishnan, CEO, StarQuik (TATA Group) and Yeshab Giri, VP, Randstad Technologies and Specialties. Considering their vast experience in retail, the jury was uniquely positioned to adjudge the promising start-ups in retail technology.

A fitting finale to the day was the felicitation of the winners of the Re-Tech Startup Awards at a gala ceremony. RAI also lauded retail's top CIOs for their invaluable contribution to Indian retail over the years.

Day 2 saw a break-away segment especially for SME retailers under ReTechCon SME which focused on helping the retailers in 'Managing Business Growth with People, Process & Technology'. Facilitated by Vinay Hinge, CMO, Gofrugal who has an extensive experience working with SME retailers at the grassroots, the segment saw active participation from retailers in Supermarket, F&B, Specialty Retail share their experiences, issues and ideas.

Across the two days, the attendees were treated to stories of innovation using technology through brand presentations by McDonald's India (Hardcastle Restaurants Pvt. Ltd.); Bigbasket.com, StarQuik (TATA Group) and Blackberry's.

ReTechCon 2019 drew to a close with a unique interactive session moderated by Siju Narayan, GM-APAC, Loyalty Juggernaut Inc. that saw consumers from different age groups and professions discuss their buying preferences, behaviour and expectations from retailers.

The conclave offered great learning, giving each one something s/he could apply in business. 😊

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE: THE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

▷ L-R: Vishal Jain, Partner, Deloitte India; Anil Shankar, VP – Solutions & Technology, Shoppers Stop Ltd.; Samik Roy, Country Head (Modern Workplace), Microsoft India; Sauvik Banerjee, Tata Group Technology and Digital Leadership and Vikram Idnani, Sr. VP and Head - IT, Reliance Retail Ltd.

TECH-DRIVEN INNOVATION: POWERING BUSINESS, ENABLING GROWTH

▷ L-R: Satyen Makhija, Partner, Intelligent Automation and Emerging Technology, KPMG India; Jashbir Morzaria, Head IT, Trent Hypermarket Pvt. Ltd. (Star Bazaar); Kunal Mehta, GM - IT, Raymond Ltd. - Lifestyle Business; Sandeep Jabbal, VP - IT, Jubilant FoodWorks Ltd.; Yeshab Giri, VP, Randstad Technologies and Specialties and Ashish Bahal, National Lighting Applications Lead, Signify Innovations Pvt. Ltd. (Formerly Philips Lighting)

Presentation

Presentation

Presentation

▷ Pravin Srinivasan, Director - Sales, Retail and Growth, Microsoft India

▷ Sanjay Soni, Head – Retail & Corporate Vertical Business, LG India

▷ Baskaramoorthy D, VP - Sales, Posiflex Technology India Pvt. Ltd.

OMNI-CHANNEL RETAIL: CROSS-CHANNEL STRATEGIES THAT WORK FOR CUSTOMER DELIGHT

▷ L-R: Ranjit Satyanath, Head - Technology Ops, Infiniti Retail Ltd., Croma - A TATA Enterprise; Kunal Mehta, GM - IT, Raymond Ltd. - Lifestyle Business; Baskaramoorthy D, Vice President - Sales, Posiflex Technology India Pvt. Ltd.; Shirish Kalamkar, GM - IT, Major Brands India Pvt. Ltd.; Vinod Kapote, Head - IT, Trent Ltd.; Vishal Kapil, CTO, Marks and Spencer Reliance India Ltd. and Vikas C. Raykar, Senior Researcher, STSM and Manager, Retail and Distribution, Industries Research, IBM Research

TECHNOLOGY-DRIVEN LEADERSHIP: THE ALGORITHM OF SUCCESS

▷ L-R: Kumar Rajagopalan, CEO, Retailers Association of India; Vineet Gautam, Country Head, Bestseller Retail India Pvt. Ltd.; Ashwin Khasgiwala, Director, Reliance Brands Ltd. and Chief Operations Controller, Reliance Retail Ltd.; Gaurav Mahajan, President - Apparel, Raymond Ltd.; Raj Raguneethan, Regional Business Leader, Retail & Consumer Goods Microsoft Corporation, Asia and Rakesh Biyani, Joint Managing Director, Future Retail Ltd.

Presentation

▷ Kumarswamy Hiremath, Head Sales and Marketing- Retail Technology, Delopt

Presentation

▷ Vinay Hinge, CMO, Gofrugal

Presentation

▷ Anurag Sehgal, MD, Experiential Design Lab Pvt. Ltd.

FUTURE FOCUS: RETHINKING RETAIL WITH RPA, AI AND ML

▸ L-R: Sandeep Mistry, Head - IT , Pantaloons (Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Ltd.); Ajay Aggarwal, Retail E-Commerce Entrepreneur, Advisor & Mentor; Pooraan Jaiswal, Group CTO, TBZ (Tribhovandas Bhimji Zaveri Ltd.); KK Dakhara, Vertical Head, Prama Hikvision India Pvt. Ltd. and Sandeep Jabbal, VP - IT, Jubilant FoodWorks Ltd.

UNLOCKING SUPPLY CHAIN POTENTIAL FOR SPEED, TRANSPARENCY & RELIABILITY

▸ L-R: Siju Narayan, GM-APAC, Loyalty Juggernaut Inc.; Lt. Col. Vijay Nair, Head Distribution and Logistics, Reliance Retail Ltd. (Digital); Abhijit Khatu, GM, ID Fresh Food India Pvt. Ltd.; Meheriar Patel, Group CTO, Jeena & Company; Ranjan Sharma, CIO, Head - SCM, Captive eCommerce Business and QA, Bestseller Retail India and Rajeev Singh, Group Buisness Manager - Home Appliances and Home Electronics, Infiniti Retail Ltd. - Croma (A Tata Enterprise)
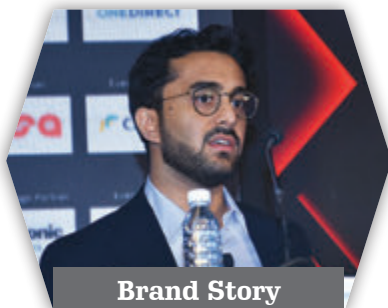
Brand Story

▸ Akshay Jatia, Director - IT and Brand Extensions, McDonald's India (Hardcastle Restaurants)
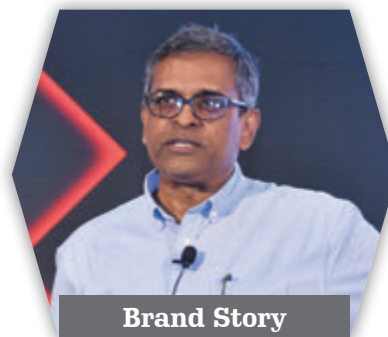
Brand Story

▸ K Radhakrishnan, CEO, StarQuik (TATA Group)

DIGITAL COMMERCE: TRANSFORMING INDIA'S CONSUMPTION STORY

▷ L-R: Sujoy Mitra, Head - Business Technology, Hometown (Praxis Home Retail Ltd., Future Group); Kiran Komatla, Sr. VP - IT, Burger King India Pvt. Ltd.; Sunil Khosla, EVP– Sales and Marketing, Head – Digital Business - Retail, India Transact Services Limited (AGS); Pooraan Jaiswal, Group CTO, TBZ (Tribhovandas Bhimji Zaveri Ltd.) and Sarfaraz Miller, Head - IT, Celio India

NEW AGE MARKETING – BEYOND DISCOUNTS: PERSONALISED, ENGAGING, DIGITAL

▷ L-R: Kaveri Misra, Industry Strategist, Adobe Systems; Abhimanyu Lal, Chief Product Officer & Business Head, Pepperfry; Arvind R P, Director – Marketing & Communications, McDonald's India (West and South); Monica Singh, Head Marking & PR, Bestseller Retail India Pvt. Ltd. (Vero Moda, Jack & Jones, ONLY); Rajiv Nair, CEO, Kaya Ltd.; Vivek Kapoor, Co - Founder, Dineout and Vishwajeet Sukhija, Subsidiary Lead, Business Apps, Microsoft

Brand Story

▷ Amit Verma, Director, Bigbasket.com

Brand Story

▷ Harcharan Singh, CIO, Blackberrys

CIO/CTO FELICITATION CEREMONY...KUDOS TO THEIR SERVICE

Presentation

▷ Prashobh Chandralayam, ED and Partner, IBM India Pvt. Ltd.

Presentation

▷ Nimish Kumar Vishnoi, Manager-Product and Strategy, Securico

Presentation

▷ Ravi Batra, DGM - Solution Business, Panasonic

COMMANDMENTS OF NEW RETAIL – CONSUMER WISHLIST

RETECHCON SME - MANAGING BUSINESS GROWTH WITH PEOPLE, PROCESS & TECHNOLOGY

NEXT GENERATION IN CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE - WORKSHOP BY MICROSOFT

THE WINNERS OF THE RETECH STARTUP AWARDS 2019 ARE...

Winner: Aryabhatta Robotics Pvt. Ltd. (Wesense.ai)

Founded in 2017 with the vision to innovate in the Field of AI and Robotics, Aryabhatta Robotics Pvt. Ltd. started with hardware and software products for retail.

Runner Up: Shopr360

ShopR360® is a cloud-based video analytics platform founded by Elixir Softech Pvt. Ltd. to capture in-store information and trends. It has patented technology and presence across India, Middle East, and Singapore.

Second Runner Up: BPRISE Pvt. Ltd.

BPRISE is an advertising and marketing technology firm that brings brands and retailers closer to their mobile-first customers in the online and offline space through ads triggered at relevant locations and measures the impact of ads on conversion and engagement.

Second Runner Up: Tango IT (Tango Eye)

Tango Eye is a computer vision company that uses AI and ML to convert video data into actionable insights for improved efficiency, increased sales and security at retail store fronts.

PARTNERS AT RETAIL TECHNOLOGY CONCLAVE 2019

Presenting Partner

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Gold Partner — **Reliance** RETAIL

Gold Partner — **POSIFLEX**

Digital Signage Partner — **LG** Business Solutions

Innovation Partner — **IBM**

AI & Surveillance Partner — **HIKVISION** See Far, Go Further

Silver Partner — **randstad**

In-Store Technology Partner — **DELOPT**

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Associate Partner — **AVERY DENNISON**

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Associate Partner — **indiatransact | AGS**

Associate Partner — **EXPERIENTIAL DESIGN LAB**

ERP Partner — **LOGIC**

Digital Partner — **Adobe**

Mobility Partner — **GOFRUGAL** Experience simplicity

Event Partner — **Nikiluxx**

Event Partner — **Signify**

Event Partner — **STALLION GROUP**

Event Partner — **ONEDIRECT**

Event Partner — **ZVOLV**

Event Partner — **aidio**

Event Partner — **NeoSOFT TECHNOLOGIES**

Event Partner — **casa**

Event Partner — **Cashfree**

Event Partner — **TCI**

Event Partner — **I-TEK**

Digital Payment Partner — **airtel Payments Bank**

Digital Signage Partner — **Panasonic BUSINESS**

Event Partner — **RAISER**

Event Partner — **exclusife** grow your business

Event Partner — **radiowalla.in** ...let's play!

Event Partner — **team**

Event Partner — **ACCURA SHELVING SYSTEMS PVT. LTD.**

Event Partner — **wesense.ai**

Event Partner — **Billeasy**

Event Partner — **meezan**

Smart Security Partner — **SECURICO**

Feedback Partner — **TellUs** Feedback

Cashless Partner — **BIZpaye**

Charity Partner — **TRRAIN**

Magazine Partner — **storai**
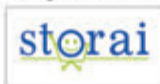
Digital Marketing Partner — **rai GLOBALLINKER**

Digital Marketing Partner — **replenish**

ENHANCING THE EXPERIENCE

HR heads from across the industry convened at Manning Modern Retail 2019 to discuss how to make working in modern retail more delightful for employees

Retail is not a business of products but that of people. It has always been about spreading happiness to the lives it touches. In recent times, there has been a lot of talk in the industry about creating 'experiences' for customers and how the customers experience is pivotal to the business. There is another kind of customer who is equally critical to the business—the 'Internal Customer', the Employee. This year's Manning Modern Retail Conclave (MMR) shone light on the experience of these unsung heroes.

Themed 'Employee Experience (EX): Delighting the Internal Customer', the conclave saw an overwhelming participation of Retail CEOs, CPOs/CHROs, academia and thought leaders.

Speaking about the objective of 'Manning Modern Retail 2019', Kumar Rajagopalan, Chief Executive Officer, Retailers Association of India (RAI), said, "Employee Experience (EX) is the collective experience an employee has in carrying out his

❯ Kumar Rajagopalan, CEO, Retailers Association of India

daily functions at work. It is therefore important to craft a holistic employee experience strategy that improves work-life integration. Such an approach offers benefits like high productivity, lower employee turnover and a high return on investment. Getting it right requires top-down organisational commitment, out-of-the-box thinking and synchronisation of thoughts and action. The event highlighted the same."

The Conclave also saw RAI

launching the first edition of 'Sustainable Future Fashion Apparel Design Contest' with the objective of attracting more design students to explore an opportunity in retail. This initiative would help bridge the talent gap through exposure and interactions for the young talent with major retail industry players. The winner got the opportunity to do an 8-week live project at Future Fashions Ltd.

The event also witnessed the

Keynote Session

▸ B. Venkataramana, President – Group HR, Landmark Group India

Knowledge Session

▸ Dr. Harish Shetty, Eminent Psychiatrist

Ignite Session

▸ Sanchayan Paul, Co-Founder, KaryaMitr.com

launch of a vernacular technology platform to skill, assess and hire blue- and grey-collared workforce for the Retail sector by RAI together with KaryaMitr, a specialised skilling and jobs firm.

In addition to the launch, the attraction at MMR 2019 were its dynamic array of speakers, which included: Brian Bade, CEO, Reliance Digital Ltd.; Dhanashree Kulkarni, Chief People Officer, Future Group India; Mukta Nakra, Head, Human Resources, Marks & Spencer Reliance India Pvt. Ltd. and Priya M Pillai, Head - HR, Retail and Corporate, Titan Industries Ltd. among others.

The riveting panel discussions through the day touched upon various aspects of HR, including:

♦ Employee Experience (EX) – Delighting the Internal Customers

♦ Beyond Inclusion – Making your D&I efforts talk less and work more

♦ Developing Retail Talent for a VUCA World

Coffee & Conversations - The Journey To The Top

▸ L-R: BS Nagesh, Chairman - RAI, Founder - TRRAIN and Chairman - Shoppers Stop Ltd.; Ameera Shah, Promotor & Managing Director, Metropolis Healthcare Ltd. and Anita Dongre, Founder and Chief Creative Officer, House of Anita Dongre Ltd.

♦ Machine Learning for HR – People Analytics Demystified

While the audiences got a treasure trove of insights from the above what really got them excited was the talk on 'HR Manager - The Mental Health Soldier' by renowned psychiatrist Dr Harish Shetty. The Coffee & Conversations between BS Nagesh, Chairman, RAI; Founder – TRRAIN & Ameera Shah, Promoter & MD, Metropolis Healthcare and Anita Dongre, Founder, House of Anita Dongre was a treat as well as the audience learnt valuable lessons through the stories of the two self-made women entrepreneurs.

MMR 2019 culminated into the 4th edition of the prestigious 'Retail HR Awards 2019' that recognised best practices and talent in the industry. ☺

PANEL DISCUSSION: EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE(EX): DELIGHTING THE INTERNAL CUSTOMERS

▷ L-R: Rajesh Padmanabhan, Director & Group CHRO, Welspun Group; Sanjay Shetty, Head - Strategic Account Management, Randstad India; Mukta Nakra, Head - Human Resources, Marks and Spencer Reliance India Ltd.; Chaitanya N Sreenivas, VP-HR & HR Head India & South Asia, IBM; Mohit Dhanjal, Business Head- Shirting (B2C), Raymond Ltd. and Brian Bade, CEO - Reliance Digital

Case Study

▷ John Cherian, Co-Founder & ED, Enparadigm Performance Solutions

Ignite Session

▷ Gagandeep Josan, CEO, Nittio Learn

Ignite Session

▷ Swati Rao, Associate Director - Corporate, HeathifyMe

Case Study

▷ Dr. Vivek Belhekar, Department of Applied Psychology, University of Mumbai

Case Study

▷ Dr. Rajesh Save, Independent Consultant

Case Study

▷ Pravin Agarwala, Co-Founder & CEO, BetterPlace

PANEL DISCUSSION: BEYOND INCLUSION - MAKING YOUR DIVERSITY & INCLUSION EFFORTS TALK LESS AND WORK MORE

28th August 2019 | The Westin Garden City, Mumbai

▷ L-R: Priya M Pillai, Head - HR, Retail and Corporate, Titan Industries; Adhir Mane, CHRO - Lifestyle Business, Raymond Ltd.; Shraddha Naik, HR - Business Partner, SAP India; Asis Patnaik, Head HR – Grocery Retail, Reliance Retail; Nivedita Nanda, Group CHRO, Kaya Ltd.; Dhanashree Kulkarni, Chief People Officer, Corporate Group Resources & Strategic Projects, Future Group and L. Muralikrishnan, Chief Branding Officer, Wow! Momo

Motivational Talk

▷ Ameera Shah, Promotor & Managing Director, Metropolis Healthcare Ltd.

Ignite Session

▷ Ajay Sawhney, Campus Director - Mumbai, Pearl Academy

Knowledge Session

▷ Madhu Damodaran, Lawyer and Company Secretary, Allsec Technology

Announcement

▷ Anil Prem Dsouza, Founder and CEO, Simpliance

Case Study

▷ Anjali Raghuvanshi, Chief People Officer, Randstad India

AND THE WINNERS OF RETAIL HR AWARDS 2019 ARE...

Winner – Emerging Young Leader in HR: Shruti Mishra, PUMA Sports India Pvt Ltd

Winner – Best Innovations in Recruitment: Reliance Retail Limited

Winner – Best Innovation in Retention Strategy: Raymond Limited

Winner – Best Learning & Development Strategy: Reliance Retail Ltd

THE WINNERS OF THE 'SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FASHION APPAREL DESIGN CONTEST' ARE

Winner – Aishwarya Shetty, Sophia Polytechnic

First Runner-up: Veena Sawant, Goradia School of Professional Studies

Second Runner-up: Aditi Abraham, MIT Institute of Design – Pune

FELICITATION: RAI HR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PARTNERS @ MANNING MODERN RETAIL-2019

CELEBRATING THE CRÈME DE LA CRÈME

The Food Retail industry lauded the best and discussed the changing flavours of Food Retail in India at the 3rd edition of 'Annapoorna Food Retail Awards'

The Indian Food Retail industry is changing as rapidly as the Indian consumers are. We have seen a drastic shift from fragmented local markets to larger centralised wholesale markets. Thanks to modern retail, urbanization and the increased purchasing power, what was once aspirational food is now within reach of the middle class. But the journey has just commenced, there's a lot more to achieve.

By the next financial year, the Indian food retail market is expected to reach Rs. 61 lakh crore (US$ 915 billion) representing 66 percent of the country's total revenue from retail. And that's why the expo by Annapoorna World of Food India, the B2B trade fair for the Food and Beverage Industry in the Indian Sub-Continent, is so important.

The 14th edition of the expo included the 3rd edition of the 'Annapoorna Food Retail Awards', supported by the Retailers Association of India (RAI) at a glittering ceremony held in Mumbai. The gala function was attended by some renowned names in food industry, which included food retail stalwarts, celebrity chefs and international dignitaries.

Since the last three years, Annapoorna Food Retail Awards have been felicitating individuals/companies who, with their unique contribution, have enhanced the flavour of food retail in India.

The awards ceremony was preceded by a stimulating panel discussion on the 'Changing Flavours of the Food Business: Challenges and Opportunities'. Food retail industry stalwarts deliberated on the rapid shifts that food retail business is witnessing with new players bringing in fresh ideas driven by technology advancements.

Moderated by Kumar Rajago-

▷ L-R: Dhananjay Sengupta, CEO - Small Formats, Future Group; Devendra Chawla, MD & CEO, Spencer's Retail Ltd.; Ashwin Khasgiwala, Director, Reliance Brands Ltd. and Chief Operations Controller, Reliance Retail Ltd.; Jamshed S. Daboo, MD, Trent Hypermarket Pvt Limited (Star Bazaar); Navin Gurnaney, CEO, Tata Starbucks Pvt. Ltd.; Suhail Sameer, CEO, RPSG-FMCG (Too Yumm! Guiltfree Industries); Kumar Rajagopalan, CEO, Retailers Association of India

palan, CEO, RAI, the panel comprised some eminent personalities in the food retail space including Ashwin Khasgiwala, Director, Reliance Brands Ltd. & Chief Operations Controller, Reliance Retail Ltd.; Devendra Chawla, MD & CEO, Spencer's Retail Ltd.; Dhananjay Sengupta, CEO, Small formats, Future Group; Jamshed S. Daboo, MD, Trent Hypermarket Pvt. Ltd. (Star Bazaar); Navin Gurnaney, CEO, Tata Starbucks Pvt. Ltd. and Suhail Sameer, CEO, RPSG-FMCG, (Too Yumm! Guiltfree Industries).

The eminent jury included industry leaders, illustrious and famed named. The jury included:

Gerald Böse, President & CEO, Koelnmesse GmbH; Dr. Jürgen Morhard, Consul General, Consulate General of the Republic of Germany, India; H.E. Guilherme de Aguiar Patriota, Consul General, Consulate General of Brazil; Stefania Costanza, Consul General, Koelnmesse Consulate General of Italy; Padma Shri Chef Imtiyaz Qureshi, Master Chef - ITC Hotels; Chef Pankaj Bhadouria, Celebrity Chef; Chef Ranveer Brar, Celebrity Chef; Chef Ajay Chopra, Celebrity Chef; Chef Amrita Raichand, Celebrity Chef; Chef Harpal Singh Sokhi, Celebrity Chef; Sameer Malkani, President & Co-founder, Food Blogger Association of India; Amit Lohani, Founder Convener, Fo-

rum of Indian Food Importers; Sahil Gilani, Director - Sales & Marketing, Gits Food Products Pvt. Ltd.; Alok Pandey, Head HoReCa, Metro Cash & Carry India Pvt. Ltd.; Avininder Singh, Social Media and Hospitality Consultancy, Escapades Lifestyle Pvt. Ltd. and Nitin Nagrale, Vice President Materials and Projects, Foodlink Services India Pvt. Ltd.

The insightful discussion culminated in a gala ceremony in which the crème de la crème of retail food industry were given their due recognition.

With as many as 11 award categories, Annapoorna Awards was the biggest ever.

THE WINNERS OF THE 3RD EDITION OF THE 'ANNAPOORNA FOOD RETAIL AWARDS 2019' ARE:

Food Services Aggregator of the Year
Fresh Produce Value Creation Services Pvt. Ltd.
(go4fresh)

Food Startup of the Year
Nascens Enterprises Pvt. Ltd. (Happa Foods) and
Expedite Foods (Puzzles)

Tech Adoption Food Retailers of the Year
Spar Hypermarket (Max Hypermarket India Pvt. Ltd.)

Restaurant of the Year
Batra Bros Food and Beverages Pvt. Ltd. (Cafe Delhi Heights)

THE WINNERS OF THE 3RD EDITION OF THE 'ANNAPOORNA FOOD RETAIL AWARDS 2019' ARE:

QSR of the Year (Indian Brand)
The ThickShake Factory Pvt. Ltd.

Private Label Food Retailers of the Year
Spar Hypermarket (Max Hypermarket India Pvt. Ltd.)
(Spar India)

QSR of the Year (International Brand)
Tata Starbucks Pvt. Ltd. (Starbucks Coffee)

Supermarket of the Year
Trent Hypermarket Pvt. Ltd. (STAR Market)

Hypermarket of the Year
Spencer's Retail Ltd.

Food CEO of the Year
Suhail Sameer, CEO, RPSG-FMCG,
(Too Yumm! Guiltfree Industries)

Food Retailer of the Year (Multiple Format)
Reliance Retail Ltd.

NEW NAME, BETTER GAME

International Home + Housewares Show to Become The Inspired Home Show in 2020 for greater alignment with consumer trends

Next March, the global housewares industry will go to Chicago for the 123rd convening of the industry's primary marketplace, but the gathering will be under a new name—The Inspired Home Show. Last February, the International Housewares Association (IHA) announced it was rebranding the name of its world-class trade event, the International Home + Housewares Show, to The Inspired Home Show, IHA's Global Home + Housewares Market in 2020. The change is part of the Association's expansion of The Inspired Home platform, which was created to align with consumer trends shifting from functional home design to aspirational lifestyle development. Consumers drive retail purchases, and their lifestyles drive the things they buy. Design and function are no longer the sole reasons people purchase housewares products.

THE COMMITMENT CONTINUES

IHA remains committed to providing a world-class, trade-only Show while increasing the industry's engagement with the consumer through connections with social influencers. These efforts will come together next March during The Inspired Home Show, IHA's Global Home + Housewares Market, which has been re-imagined with a focus on lifestyle, helping both exhibitors and retailers reach the ultimate decision maker—the consumer.

The Inspired Home Show will help retailers and suppliers understand

how design and function fit into their customers' lifestyles and to find ways to inspire them to purchase products that complement those lifestyles.

FOR THE CONSUMERS

As the premier home and housewares event in the world, exhibitors and retail attendees expect a Show that reflects current trends and attitudes. The Inspired Home Show will maintain all relevant aspects of the International Home + Housewares Show while introducing new elements that help product suppliers and retailers meet the needs of the changing consumer marketplace, one in which consumers are seeking to develop their own aspirational lifestyles, fuelled by digital connectivity and fulfilled in an omni-channel environment. The Show will remain a trade-only event at McCormick Place in Chicago and will maintain its "five expos in one" format.

The consumer sensibility will influence also other aspects of the Show, including educational sessions, special displays and networking events, in ways that will help both suppliers and retailers better meet their needs. Keynote educational programming will include Lee Eiseman's colour trends presentations, exploration into consumer lifestyle trends and a state of the industry report on housewares. Other educational offerings will include Innovation Theater sessions all four Show days, the Smart Talks stage in the IHA Smart Home Pavilion and the Inventors Revue sessions.

The Inspired Home Show in 2020 will be held at McCormick Place in Chicago from March 14 – 17, 2020

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With any questions, please contact the Show's representative in India,
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THE FOLK TALE

For founder Manjir Chatterjee, Folk is an idea that enriches the lives it touches—right from the craftspeople who make the products to customers who use them

For as long as she can remember, Kolkata-based entrepreneur Manjir Chatterjee has been fascinated by different forms of crafts. As she cultivated them, she realised that every piece of craft was born of necessity. With changing needs, craft ought to evolve too to become more attuned to the modern user's lifestyle. Armed with her unique idea and her proclivity for lean manufacturing methods—optimising productivity while minimising waste—she set out on the journey of rethinking traditional Indian crafts and never looked back.

Manjir is the proud founder of Folk, a comprehensive design and manufacturing company that specialises in making bags and accessories from natural materials.

With a focus on creating products that are sustainable, Folk has been producing merchandise for several international brands and has a thriving e-commerce portal with major retail projects in the pipeline.

In the initial days of starting her business, Manjir found support from some of her friends studying at ISI (Indian Statistical Institute) who helped her venture into the busi-

▷ Folk's pride is its inclusive workforce

ness. They set up her first email ID with which she could send her first export order to the USA. Manjir has come a long way from there…

Over the last 16 years, she has built a business that not only has a loyal clientele but has also fostered a comprehensive skill development programme that nurtures immense talent.

Manjir shares her journey…

THE THOUGHT BEHIND FOLK

Manjir's primary motivation behind starting Folk was to make daily lifestyle practices simple, organised and clutter-free. She wanted to create products that she had always wanted to use, but never found in the market. When she turned to authentic, Indian artisanship for inspiration, she discovered that while those products certainly enjoy an exotic appeal, they fall short of meeting a user's practical needs. The beloved crafts of rural India were dying, primarily because the designs were not functional, and the brand of aesthetics didn't have

significant takers in the market. As a result, the livelihoods of the craftsmen were getting affected.

"Folk is my way of marrying traditional artistry with minimalistic sensibilities and ergonomic solutions so that our craftspeople have a profession that actually pays bills. I call it Folk to create an idea space that accommodates people, and not ethnicities. It is not an ethnic brand, but an idea with global appeal," said the young entrepreneur.

MEET THE FOLKS

Folk is a people's brand—a social enterprise with 76 members belonging to diverse identity spaces. It provides livelihoods to artisans and craftspeople, as well as a section of the youth—16 and above. It has bridged the gap between genders, castes and other socio-cultural registers. 60% of Folk employees are women. It actively seeks out physically impaired or socially ostracised individuals to train them in vocational courses and rehabilitate them in a vibrant work culture. In Manjir's experience, employing differently abled people enhances the productivity of the workforce.

Since the initial help she got was from friends at ISI, it is only fitting that her symbiotic business partner, Sandipan is an alumnus of ISI.

An MBA from IIM Calcutta, Sandipan became an entrepreneur at the age of 24 to start MoneyControl.com. His expertise in Data Science

> Manjir Chatterjee, Founder of Folk.

and Ethnographic Decision Modelling has not only contributed to the staggering growth of Just Dial enterprise but has also lent a very adept hand in shaping the Folk business goals and *modus operandi*. Sandeep lives by the motto of his alma mater's founding father, PC Mahalanobis, 'Selection, not elimination'. "It has had a part to play in our concerted effort to build an inclusive workspace based on fair practices," explained Manjir.

THE FOLK WAY

According to Manjir, two things make Folk unapologetically superior to the rest—design and quality. The products have been made for the global market and the global appeal

is reflected in the team's ergonomic way of thinking. "Our design thinking is informed by muscle memory; it's derived from our habitual gestures. For example, all our bags come with an elastic band where one can tie one's keys. It's because we know that most people waste a lot of time looking for their keys in their bags. This design innovation saves time, and makes the user feel more organised and in control," she explained.

She describes Folk as an enterprise that is a state of mind, nourished by radical exchanges between possibilities and probabilities. "Our products are sustainable and eco-friendly. Our bags define us; but

▸ Folk's first major milestone was setting up a factory

why should they be the only definition? We have range of home décor products. We are constantly experimenting with materials and forms. We already have plans for launching products enhanced by solar power," she added.

THE FOLK LIFE SO FAR

"Our time with Folk has been nothing short of exhilarating," said Manjir. The first major milestone was setting up of the factory in 2003. It was one step up from being a merchant exporter, and a step towards greater beginnings.

But through the course of the journey, the team came to realise that every high point that Folk was to enjoy would be born of a low point. For instance, in 2008, Folk lost around ₹ 25 lakh on an export order. Manjir was compelled to fly to England to follow up on the payment. "Once I got there, I thought to myself, 'why not set up a station here?'. That's how the office and warehouse came about in Liverpool," she shared.

With the arrival of Sandipan in 2017, Folk rose to a new height from a proprietorship to a Private Limited enterprise. The year 2019 too has been promising. "We are all set to start our maiden retail venture with Khazana, a chapter of Taj. I don't believe in one beginning but in several new beginnings within the breadth of a single journey," said Manjir.

Speaking about the lows, the entrepreneur said that the biggest challenge that she has had to face was changing people's perception every time they heard the word 'Folk simply means people. But the popular implication is ethnic. "Reclaiming a word is not easy. To me, the journey of Folk has been the journey from ethnic aesthetics to functional products with a global appeal. Through the course of years, we have managed to strike the perfect harmony between what's relatable and what's aspirational. And that's only half the odyssey," she explained.

BIG BUSINESS DREAM

As of now, Folk enjoys a European consumer base. The business operates in bulk orders, from its warehouses. Manjir feels that the time has come to make it a mainstay in every lifestyle corner. The big business dream is to have a retail presence in the global retail space.

Folk derives its business aspirations from business giants like Amul and Tata. "We feel a kinship towards these organizations based on our shared values. We believe in making a difference that's far reaching and sustainable. To that end, we have already joined hands with several CSR units of Tata enterprises. Soon, with the help of our design sensibility and quality consciousness, Folk will announce its grand entry into retail spaces," Manjir said.

"We believe in horizontal growth.

A business is much bigger than its owner, and there's more to a product than its apparent utility. The aim of our products is to leave a lasting impression on people's lives. To achieve that, one must ensure sustainable growth. Now that our maiden retail venture with Khazana is about to begin, I am confident that the goal is within reach," she added.

VISION FOR THE BRAND

Manjir finds it crucial to not lose sight of the purpose that fuels Folk's journey. "We are not a fashion brand. Our aim is to create a diverse range of aspirational yet affordable lifestyle products. We aim to offer sustainable livelihood to artisans who create designs but don't have enough to feed their families. Curating rare and endangered crafts, and making them lucrative will always remain the *raison d'etre* of our enterprise," she explained.

Folk is also gearing towards augmenting its capacity, in every possible aspect—from conception to production.

ON THE ASSOCIATION WITH RAI

Manjir thinks it's important to be associated with a platform like the Retailers Association of India (RAI). "It has definitely enriched my understanding of business and relevant markets. A free dialogue between professionals and experts of various fields goes a long way in defining individual business goals and ideals," she said.

ON RAI-GLOBALLINKER

"The name GlobalLinker speaks for itself. It is an important platform for anyone who is serious about doing business. As a new member of this collective, I am fortunate to be able to learn so much from veterans in various fields of business and trade," she opined.

ADVICE TO BUSINESS ASPIRANTS

When you enter the foyer of competitive businesses, you are a professional first. The other identities that you inhabit, come later. But being attentive to your business doesn't mean you have to become a conformist and tread the beaten track. Be adventurous, fail, and rise again. Stay away from naysayers and never say no to your untapped potential.

RETAIL OUT OF THE BOX

The future of retail has arrived—Retail as a Service (RaaS). With its many benefits the new model is a clear win for all the stakeholders—the consumers, the brands and the retailers

By Surender Gnanaolivu

For all the talk of 'the death of physical retail', it has become clear that brick-and-mortar retail isn't dead as majority of sales still happen there. Today, consumers are offered the same brands over and over in all retail destinations making the shopping journey often very predictable and mundane. In parallel, we are in the era when many of the coolest brands offering innovative products are starting online and being discovered on social media.

How do they deliver a physical store experience to enable consumers to touch their products without having to invest in long lease real estate, operations and stocks needed to support an entire physical store? Thanks to 'necessity—the mother of invention', a new model in retailing has evolved successfully to make this possible.

READY TO RETAIL

Welcome to the new concept in retailing—the RaaS (Retail as a Service) model, much like the SaaS (Software as a Service) model. This enables any brand to be able to go offline quickly with minimum investment by renting a ready-to-retail space available on short lease periods at prime retail locations. A typical ready-to-retail space offers highly flexible fixtures, signage, lighting, Wi-Fi, point-of-sale hardware, a dedicated staff, tech-enabled phygital product info and experience devices supported with data capture, and insightful analytics dashboards.

Photo Courtesy: Fourpost

> Fourpost is the future rebooted concept of the declining department store format

▷ The Re:store outlet based on the Retail as a Service concept in Tony Union Square, San Francisco

BIG BOX REBOOTED

Fourpost, the brainchild of Mark Ghermezian, opened its first ready-to-retail store called Studio Store at the Mall of America in Minneapolis, offering space to about 30 brands ranging from 50 - 100 sq. ft. in short-term six-month and one-year lease terms priced at around $3,000. Curated brands like Baubles and Bobbies, Mend Jewellery, Still Kickin', Julia Knight and Namakan Fur were able to successfully set up their retail presence in this premium mall, by being present in the Studio Store, which normally would be way out of their budget.

The store offers an innovative department store experience offering a highly dynamic brand portfolio in a compulsive touch and tech-enabled environment. Probably, this is the future rebooted concept of the declining department store format.

CURATED FASHION STUDIO

Re:store, the creation of Selene Cruz, opened its first outlet in San Francisco's Tony Union Square to offer trendy and difficult to find, online brands in an immersive, experiential and instagrammable retail space. Brands pay as little as $350 per month as well as a 20% commission. The store also features community workspace for start-up fashion entrepreneurs to work and interact with customers.

Today, the store offers an exciting updated portfolio of fashion, beauty, home and wellness brands. Customers get to shop for well-known brands like Sézane, & Other Stories, Sleepy Jones and Mansur Gavriel, alongside new ones, like The Line by K, Boyish and Feals.

UN-BOXED PHYGITALLY

Anec. (pronounced as Anec dot), creation of Inspired Kinematics in Bengaluru, is a compact ready-to-retail concept that helps online and start-up lifestyle brands to connect with their consumers in an experiential retail format delivered through touch and tech. The first store, a first of its kind in India, was set up three months back in a footprint of 90 sq. ft. at the popular Forum Neighborhood Mall. It features trending styles of crafted

▷ Bengaluru based Anec. (pronounced as Anec dot) is India's first ready-to-retail store

fashion footwear offered by the brand VAPH.

The store has a combination of RFID, imaging and digital technology to help present curated offerings in a phygital environment that enables frictionless trial, informed decision making, payment and purchase analytics. This ready-to-retail store has delivered a strong traction of over 1500 walk-ins since it opened.

WIN-WIN-WIN

The RaaS model is quickly gaining ground as it is has shown promising results in delivering value to all its stakeholders—the consumer, the retailer and the brands. Consumers get to engage experientially with new brands offering different and differentiated products during every visit to the store.

For retailers, the burden of expensive long lease real estate, operations and stocks cost can be eased to short lease, intelligent compact spaces that deliver viable businesses. Brands get to build awareness and stronger relationships with their core customers, while testing, measuring, iterating and improving their retail strategies affordably. It's clearly a win-win-win for all.

Surender Gnanaolivu has an experience of over two decades in Retail Strategy, Store Design, Planning & Development, Visual Merchandising, Roll-out Management, Retail Audits, and Training working with some of India's best retail brands. He is currently a Sr Retail Experience Consultant.
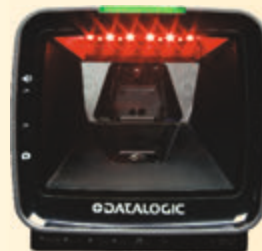
A MIDYEAR STATUS REPORT

Taking stock of expert predictions about retail for 2019

By Steve Dennis

n January, I went out on a limb with my predictions for retail in 2019. So how are things looking so far?

1. Apocalypse? No. The retail apocalypse narrative continues to be part of the Zeitgeist, and it looks like we could see a record number of store closings (In the US) this year. Yet, thousands of stores will open, dozens of primarily brick & mortar retailers with remarkable business models are killing it. Physical retail will still show positive growth, while accounting for more incremental growth than e-commerce. I guess it's a matter of perspective. And my perspective continues to be physical retail isn't dead; boring retail is.

2. **The collapse of the middle continues apace.** I wrote about how it's "death in the middle" in 2011 and started writing and speaking about retail's great bifurcation in 2015. When we look at the retailers that are closing vast amounts of stores or going away completely, most often, they've gotten stuck in the mediocre middle. We'll see more
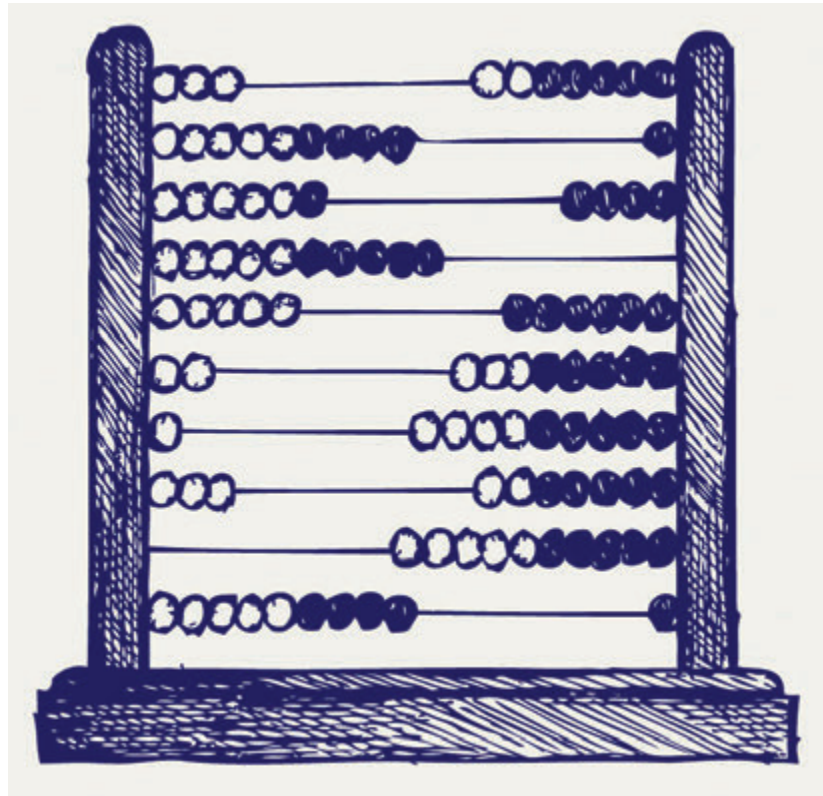
of the same the balance of the year.

3. **The stores strike back.** Walmart, Target and a host of other traditional retailers that were starting to see their stores as assets, instead of liabilities posted materially improved results. We continue to witness many more retailers roll-out of buy online pick up in-store (BOPIS), curbside pick-up, accelerated delivery times and

other attempts to neutralize Amazon. The big issue now is avoiding a race to the bottom.

4. **For DNVB's (Digitally Native Vertical Brands) now it's mostly about brick & mortar.** Isn't ironic? Just about every day it seems that another disruptive brand announces a store opening. Investor money is piling into concepts like Neighborhood Goods to help digitally-native brands get into physical retail,

despite the prior insistence that stores were dead. And DNVB founders keep talking about how a physical store actually helps their online business—as if this wasn't obvious.

5. **An Amazon and Walmart showdown.** This prediction looks pretty solid as both sides are upping the ante on delivery times and duking it out on Prime Day. Unfortunately for Walmart—at least so far—Amazon may be getting the better of them. This will only get uglier.

6. **The emerging BOPIS (Buy online, pick up in-store) crunch.** The core of this prediction was that buy-online-pick-up in store (as well as ship from store) was going to continue to grow dramatically, but that many retailers would start to run into execution problems. As it turn out, stores aren't always the best fulfilment centres.

7. **Stores as theatre**. Way too many people go on and on about "experiential" retail being the next big thing. Some even say the most important measure is "return on experience." Please. One issue is we don't have a consistent definition of what we mean when we talk about experience. It is clear however, that many retailers are continuing to turn up the drama and interaction, from

Nike's House of Innovation to Lululemon's new Chicago store to Starbuck's Roastery concept.

8. **Micro-markets start to shine.** I would rate this one a solid incomplete. Yes, brands that are focused on niche segments continue to grow, but this definitely hasn't really hit the radar screen yet.

9. **It's the end of the mall as we know it.** Plenty of malls are dead or dying. A lot are doing incredibly well. Stories are written about the malls that are closing or getting massively re-purposed. Breathless stories are written about new malls like Hudson Yards and the American Dream, as well as the big expansion of Bal Harbour Shops. Shift happens. The future will not be evenly distributed.

10. **Voice shopping remains a yawn (for now).** The growth in smart devices remains impressive. The penetration of voice shopping remains tiny. I am sticking by my prediction that there will be a big breakout year this technology. It just won't be 2019.

11. **Better metrics start to emerge, albeit too slowly.** Nearly a year ago, Brent Franson (of WeWork) and I wrote a piece that argued that 'The Reinvention Of Retail Demands New Metrics.' Admittedly, progress here remains slow, but studies like

the ICSC's 'Halo effect' are helping more folks understand that channel-centric metrics are quite misleading. The customer is the channel.

Clearly some of these are more hopes that predictions. But with a few months left in the year, there is still time for movement, good and bad, on the accuracy of these (mostly) educated guesses. ☺

Steve Dennis is a consultant, speaker and writer on retail innovation, omni-channel strategy and marketing personalization. As President of SageBerry Consulting, he leverages over 30 years of experience to help retail and luxury industry clients accelerate their growth and become more customer-centric.

Prior to founding SageBerry, he was Senior Vice President of Strategy and Marketing at the Neiman Marcus Group. He has also held leadership positions with Sears. He has also been associated with brands like NatraSweet and Booz & Co.

He shares his insights through his blog: stevepdennis.com & Twitter feed @stevenpdennis.com.

ALLEVIATING MARGIN PRESSURES IN RETAIL

▸ Ravi Tanniru, MD, C2FO

It's raining discounts across retail outlets in India. When visiting a mall or a local store, it's hard to miss the large call out banners with unbelievable discount offers. Are discounts the only factor that determines a purchase, or is there much more that a customer seeks? According to a Deloitte study, there are three key areas where retailers really need to score to gain customers:

a) Customer engagement and a satisfying experience.

b) Greater product as well service differentiation.

c) Innovation that reduces costs and generates higher returns.

Retail CFOs across the world are exploring all possible measures to control falling margins stemming from cost pressures and remain profitable. While customer engagement and product differentiation put retailers ahead of the competition, innovative cost control measures ensure that the same is achieved while staying profitable.

However, innovative measures explored by CFOs are often capital and labour intensive, e.g. automation, robotics and artificial intelligence. One of the things that is mostly ignored but should be looked into is leveraging one's Accounts Payable (A/P). It's the liability sitting on your balance sheet that becomes one of your easiest levers to help control margins. While you cannot control consumer demand to drive more sales, you can certainly use your A/P to lower costs.

Considering the large scale of business operations, it is humanly impossible to identify the suppliers willing to discount their invoices and reaching out to buyers for an early payment. This can only be achieved by partnering with technology solutions like C2FO, who can deliver the scale and efficiency needed to make the efforts worthwhile.

We, at C2FO, solve this through innovation, in the simplest way possible by tapping into a corporate's existing liabilities and identifying the opportunities. Our technology runs proprietary algorithms between supplier discount requests and the organisation's desired rate of return to establish the real-time value of cash between businesses. Using our platform, cash rich buyers are able to push liquidity back into the supply chain while suppliers are able to accelerate their account receivables at a competitive discount rate, meeting their immediate demands of payroll, inventory purchase, and quarter-end targets. It's the most effective means to optimise working capital for everyone involved.

Businesses using C2FO fintech to accelerate their payables to vendors have experienced the following direct benefits:

A/P Acceleration

- $1.5 added to EPS
- 700 bps earnings incremental to current short-term investments
- 2.5x expected return

A/R Acceleration

- High-interest debt payoff a year ahead of schedule
- Daily Sales Outstanding (DSO) targets hit, quarter-on-quarter

This way, retailers can harness innovation resulting in cost reduction and higher returns. This is the right time for them to adopt modern technology and grow profitably riding India's consumption growth story. ☺

INSIDE THE BIGBASKET

Amit Verma, Director-Engineering, BigBasket.com reveals the secret behind Bigbasket.com's efficient, on-time and error-free operations

Every modern retail business dreams of becoming the 'perfect' business. A perfect business is one that is profitable, scalable and one with error-free operations. Is it really possible? Can there be a business that has zero errors? Amit Verma, Director-Engineering, BigBasket.com, one of India's biggest players in the online supermarket space believes that zero-error businesses exist and that BigBasket is one of them. Here's why…

DATA, DECISIONS AND THE DREAM

Supply Chain Management and Delivery Operations are all about decision making. There are some macro decisions as well as countless micro-decisions that need to be made on a daily basis. For example, when an order is placed, the decisions to be made include 'when should picking start?', 'which is the best route to take?', 'which picker should pick this item?', 'should all the items of order be picked together?', 'can chilled items be picked last?', 'should this order go by bike or van?'. This decision making happens both in the virtual world with custom software

as well as the physical world by people running the process for BigBasket on ground.

BigBasket.com currently operates in 25 cities and has more than 70 warehouses. The scale, requires proper utilization of data. Only portions of data which make sense to the concerned person need to be sent. The nature of operations, especially for BigBasket, are highly dependent on local conditions and

so items can't be standardised. For the data to support decision making reliably, BigBasket uses tailor-made software, which is flexible (configuration-driven), has an inbuilt Retry and Recovery mechanism, allows forecasting capabilities, provides easy access to reports, offers custom dashboards and monitors and sends alerts.

"There is a lot of movement of data across our software systems.

Software being software does fail. That is why we have built self-healing systems for certain scenarios, where data, if not correct, gets auto corrected in next exchange. On the process side too, if a person has to take a decision, say a picker wants to know what item he is supposed to pick, when he should pick it, should he pick items for orders together. Everything is provided right there at his/her fingertips," explained Amit.

Driven by technology the error-free operations has the following aspects: Customer, Inventory Data Management, Efficient Picking & Sorting, Improvement through Reports & Feedback, Monitoring & Alerts and Manual intervention.

IT STARTS WITH THE CUSTOMER

"BigBasket is a customer centric company and all its processes, solutions, results are geared towards making the customer happy, first. Error in operations starts from what you promise to customer. So we don't take orders if an item is not available or when we don't have delivery resources to deliver the order at a particular time-slot," said Amit.

Also, it's important to understand what zero-error operations really means. "Error in operation can mean many things to different people but from a customer point-of-view, it means two things—all items are delivered and that there is no delay in delivery. As long as the customer is getting all the items delivered on time, s/he is happy," explained the Director.

For most of its locations, the delivered items are close to 100% and even on time delivery is ~99%. This, despite the fact that Bigbasket does not use drones, conveyor belts, pods or robots. The minimal error in operations stem from the following core principles:

♦ Prioritizing customers

♦ Applying Technology to eliminate or minimise inefficiency

♦ Identifying areas of inefficiencies

♦ Data-driven decision-making

RETAIL-TIME INVENTORY DATA MANAGEMENT

Items a customer reserves on BigBasket.com become an order if the payment succeeds. If it fails, they get unreserved and the order is abandoned. The resources for delivery such as van, bike, executives are estimated weeks in advance and the capacity number is added to the system. If the entire capacity for a slot is exhausted, it becomes unavailable for booking. Here, proper inventory management becomes critical. Incorrect inventory data is one of the main causes of items not being delivered to customers. From a software point-of-view, inventory management is about addition and subtraction of inventory data. The physical inventory sits in the warehouse but inventory data exists in multiple systems due to their dis-

tributed or micro-services architecture.

The challenges that any large scale distributed warehouse operations face is having consistent view of data across various systems. The common approach is to batch the inventory related operations locally and then push the batch to other systems, particularly to the Order Management System. Until a few months ago, BigBasket too followed the same procedure. While the frequency of this sync up with other systems could be increased, there would always be a time gap during which the data would not be consistent. This led to more orders getting placed for less inventory. "We built a Custom Inventory Data Transfer Solution, which enables all inventory changes to propagate at the same time to other systems. In case the change is missed in one call, it gets corrected in the next. Additionally, while the data gets self-corrected, the rouge data is stored and sent for further debugging. This has improved our fill rate significantly," informed Amit.

When the inventory of, let's say, apples on the shelf is same as what the customer sees on the app, the chances of error reduces. There are always two kinds of data here: Warehouse Management Systems inventory data and data that customer sees as available. Ideally, these two should be in sync. However, there are times when they are not.

To address this, BigBasket built an algorithm which achieves almost real-time synchronization, while also capturing discrepancies. It also ensured that data movement did not block local operations. This optimization significantly improved the efficiency of pickers.

REPORTS & FEEDBACK

The system enables better utilization of data for decision making in operations. It also provides a dashboard for Delivery Executives bringing both functionality and ease into the delivery process. There is a historical Reporting System with a feedback loop which is used by engineers to further improve the algorithm by fixing the discrepancies in the process.

EFFICIENT PICKING AND ORDER PROCESSING

The earlier process assigned the picker a set of orders, which s/he then picked sequentially. So if each of the five separate orders had apples in them, the picker would go to the apple location five different times. In the new system, all orders of a picker having apples are grouped together. Now, the picker carries a cart and picks apples for all the orders in one go. This means that the picker has to go to one item location only once, saving time and effort. It has also led to lower attrition and higher earning. And has saved 30 minutes in the whole supply chain process.

Did you know?

According to research by Deloitte, 79% of companies with high-performing supply chains achieve revenue growth greater than the average within their industries.

Another improvement is in the grouping of orders. The older process had the picker pick orders and place it in a common area. A segregator then grouped the orders based on routes. This was a manual process that would take 30 minutes for a given slot of around 60-70 orders. Also, there would be occasional mistakes in segregation. With the new system, this process has been eliminated, which not only reduced manual errors but also the cycle time by 30 minutes.

MONITORING AND MANUAL INTERVENTION

For a company that has around the clock operations, monitoring and alerting are pivotal. "Some critical functions such as placing stock orders or computing sales forecast for the next day happens at night. Hence, it is extremely critical to ensure that if there is any break of pipeline at night, the right folks should be alerted," explained Amit. The company has built a fully automated software that shoots off Business Metric Alerts to let the business know about failures if any so that they can be mitigated in time.

However, despite the best of code being written by the best of engineers, there are bad days and nights, when the entire tech team somehow misses the alarm. At such times, a delay of even 10 minutes could result in a non-zero error operation. Even when the tech team debugs the issue, the operations can't wait. That's why, we keep manuals to Key Business or Operations to follow during such times to ensure business runs as usual," said the BigBasketeer.

With technology, processes and plain common sense BigBasket seems to have achieved the impossible goal of zero-error operations.

Adapted from 'TechXcellence: How BigBasket uses Technology to Achieve Zero Error Operations' presentation by Amit Verma, Director-Engineering, BigBasket.com at Retail Technology Conclave 2019.

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XXL GROWTH

Kolkata-based Baazar Style Retail has gone from ₹ 9 crore to ₹ 700 crore turnover in just six years by fulfilling aspirational needs of consumers in tier II, III & IV towns

Where there's a need, there's scope for business. Baazar Style Retail Pvt. Ltd. (BSRPL) was formed with the thought of fulfilling the aspirational need of consumers in the Tier II, III and IV towns for fast fashion at affordable prices. The company operates stores under the brand name 'Style Baazar' And 'Express Baazar'. Style Baazar (10,000 sq. ft.) sells garments, fast fashion and home essentials such as furnishings and utensils and Express Baazar operates on the principle, 'Quick Shop. One Stop.'

Today, Style Baazar is a reputed name in the value segment in East India with 77 outlets across 7 states including West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam, Tripura, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.

However, when they first opened for business with an outlet at Berhampore in the heart of Murshidabad in West Bengal in September 2013, little did the promoters know that they would make retail history—going from a turnover of ₹ 9 crore in the first year to a turnover of over ₹ 700 crore in just six years.

Clearly, they have got something right.

THE SUCCESS FORMULA

The biggest advantage that Baazar Style has over any other brands is knowledge—of the business, of the market and most importantly, of the consumers. That is because all five founders were in some way related to the garments business in West Bengal since decades—one was a manufacturer, the other a wholesaler and distributor, the third a retailer, fourth a CA and the last was in the construction business.

Founders Rajendra Surana, Rajendra Gupta, Pradeep Agarwal, Rohit Kedia and Bhagwan Prasad had been business colleagues and friends since 20 years. While manufacturing and selling men's garments across West Bengal, they realised the demand for value retail especially in the categories of garments, fast fashion and home

essentials. Having worked the market for so many years, they knew the pulse of the consumer.

So they decided to gather their experience and insights to start Baazar Style that combined everything that the consumers in smaller towns wanted. They were joined by young CA Shreyans Surana (Rajendra Surana's son) who helped them manage finance, legal and operations and is credited with helping the company flourish along with director Rohit Kedia.

"Our products (menswear) were doing exceedingly well in the unorganised market. Imagine what could happen if we organised the business. So we decided to get garments for men, women and children as well as daily household items under one roof in an air-conditioned environment. Having been in the garments business, we knew where we could procure the products from at low prices and pass the benefit to the consumers," said Shreyans, who is a director and the spokesperson. As they started growing, they began realising the potential of the value segment.

"In the value segment, our prices as well as variety are better than even those of well-known national brands. Also, because of our focus in the region, our products are more attuned to the tastes and preferences of local people than the other brands who do all the sourcing at a macro level. Since we are catering to the mid-low and below segment

▷ Shreyans Surana, Director, BSRPL

of the social pyramid primarily, the opportunities are galore," he added.

GETTING INTO THE BIG LEAGUE

In the first year, the company posted a turnover of ₹ 9 crore, in the second

from a semi-organised to a fully organised organisation with all the systems and SOPs in place. This is why we are hiring professionals from the industry who can help us in this journey. Creating the right culture in the organisation and the environment is important. We are doing a lot on stock optimisation and category planning as well. We are focussing on increasing our manpower efficiencies and building SOPs," explained Shreyans.

CHALLENGES

Like others in retail, BSRPL also faces the challenge of lack of skilled workforce. To overcome this, the company is in the process of creating a Learning & Development team.

The other big challenge is the economic slowdown. Since the last one and a half years, it has impacted people's purchasing power. As a result, sales are getting distributed among competition, making it difficult to maintain same store growth.

"Last year, we posted a same store sales growth (SSG) of 5%. This year, we are heading towards a growth of 3 % – 4 %. Before that our average growth was over 10%," shared Shreyans. However, he is positive that once government's initiatives such as reduction in taxes and infrastructure development start showing results, the company's gain will be very high.

WHAT NEXT

"We are targeting to put up 100 stores by 2020 and 250 stores by 2025 and we think that growth will come from 12 states in the east and central India. Although our larger vision is to become one of the country's largest value retailers, we want to first establish ourselves in this part of the country. We are following a cluster-based approach. So in a state we go to each district, so we can have a better economy of scale. We are not planning to expand to West, North or South India. But will focus on 12 states in East India, Central India as well as Andhra," explained Shreyans.

When BSRPL started, the penetration of even modern retail chains in Bengal was limited. Out of its 77 stores, 35 are in Bengal, which makes BSRPL the biggest player in Bengal in the value segment, followed by Baazar Kolkata which has 34 stores. "There is a huge room for more players in the value segment in tier III and IV. With the impending improvement in infrastructure in these towns and increase in purchasing power the value segment will be the biggest gainer," BSRPL has set its eyes on making the most of this opportunity with the help of technology and the right processes. 😎

SUCCESS
menswear

WORK&PLAY

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

Turnover	Annual Fee	with 18% GST
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:
  a) Be registered as a company or firm in India.
  b) Be a supplier, vendor, developer or service provider to retail.
  c) Be registered under Goods and Services Tax (GST).

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

Turnover	One time Joining fee	Annual Fee	with 18% GST
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:
  a) Be registered as a company or firm in India.
  b) Be a supplier, vendor, developer or service provider to retail.

Turnover	One time Joining fee	Annual Fee	with 18% GST
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 members are organisations that help fulfil the education, academic research and training needs of the industry.

  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.

  One-time membership fee* Rs 50,000 + Annual Fee* Rs 5,000 (*18% GST)

  Total amount is Rs 64,900/-

To know more about RAI membership contact

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Sujit Dash, Manager - Membership, +91 9148085980, sujit@rai.net.in (Bangalore Chapter)

Sunil Kulkarni, Manager - Membership, +91 9550259309, sunil@rai.net.in (Hyderabad Chapter)

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NEW MEMBERS

CORE MEMBERS

- Assam Holidays, Kolkata
- Chocolate Hut, Hyderabad
- Computer Villa, Kolkata
- Deep Shikha, Gorakhpur
- GCG Retail, Bharuch
- Good Buy Super Market, Hyderabad
- Gthree Hospitality & Food Services, Mumbai
- Gurukul Enterprises, Delhi
- Hashini Enterprises, Madurai
- Hominis Fashion LLP, Bharuch
- India Forms Center Pvt.Ltd., Kolkata

- Jaggery Bags (Meaningful Design Labs Pvt.Ltd.), Delhi
- K G Car Care, Coimbatore
- Krishna Pearls & Jewellers, Hyderabad
- Kyal Trading Pvt.Ltd., Mumbai
- Light Pro solutions, Chennai
- Lorea, Hyderabad
- Magsons Supercentre, Goa
- Metro Laminates, Mumbai
- N L Imperial Food & Beverages Pvt.Ltd., Faridabad
- Nischay Infotech Pvt.Ltd., Kolkata

- Perfect Footwear, Hyderabad
- Pronto Franchising Pvt. Ltd., Chennai
- Sidi Maurya, Chennai
- Sidvin Retail, Kolkata
- Slns Automobiles, Hyderabad
- Soundville, Delhi
- Sri Prem Syndicate, Chennai
- Starbox, Chennai
- Sweet Ginger, Jaipur
- Zothan Apparels, Mijoram

ASSOCIATE MEMBER

- eRetail Cybertech Pvt.Ltd.

AFFILIATE ASSOCIATIONS

- Federation Of Mumbai Retail Cloth Dealers Association, Mumbai
- Thane Manpada Furniture Association, Thane