



THE “SHOPPING REINVENTED” MEGATREND IN INDIA



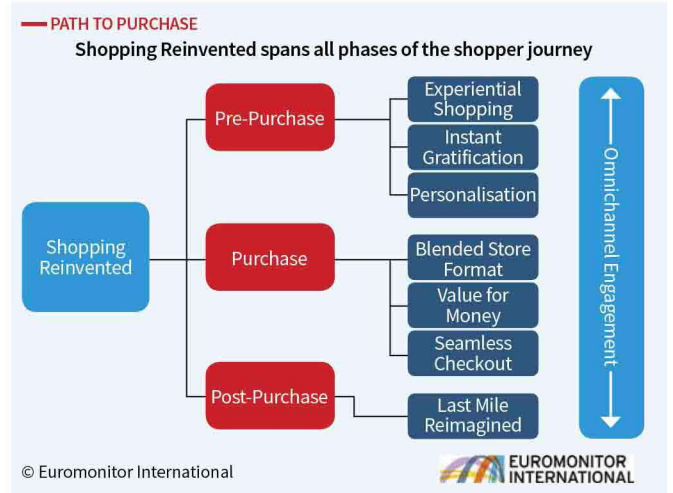
– By **Farhat Hanif**, Global Market Analyst at Euromonitor International

Today, the purpose of shopping is a journey. It's not just purchasing the product, but a relationship building process for the brand.

Shopping experience over the years has seen a paradigm shift in the way services are offered and consumed. This shift in consumer behaviour has a global impact across industries which will shape the world through 2030, termed as a “megatrend” by Euromonitor International’s team of industry trend experts, “Shopping Reinvented” reflects how economic and technological

shifts have rewritten the shopper journey holistically. Previously, purchases revolved around the transaction itself with a little bit of word-of-mouth research. However today, the purpose of shopping is a journey. It’s not just purchasing the product, but a relationship building process for the brand.

Firstly, the shopper journey can be broken down to: pre-purchase stage, purchase and the post-purchase stage. Today, brand experience has been infused into all these stages.



associated with the purchase will also be integrated into shoppers’ perception of value. Furthermore, making things quicker is not only about speeding up the payment, but curating goods and services in one location.

In the final stage – post-purchase, the shopper’s journey is not about giving something to someone in exchange for money anymore. It is about selling them a lifestyle, and lifestyles do not stop when you walk out of the store. This stage is important as connecting your brand with the consumer’s lifestyle makes the brand experience relevant.

Take a look at the pre-purchase stage. It is all about framing a relationship with the shopper, to answer the shopper’s questions about products they are exploring and show them how they can expect their purchase to fit more broadly within their values and lifestyle.

Meanwhile, in the purchase stage there has been the reinvention of the transaction. Price will still remain very important; however, today’s consumer is not paying only for the product. The convenience

Nodes of Shopping Re-invented

As we have established, each stage of the shopper’s journey is important for a brand. The pre-purchase stage is a place to strengthen the brand. While purchase stage enables more items in carts and post-purchase stage ignites the next purchase. We will get into detail of how some significant “nodes” of these stages have evolved with some examples:

Experiential Shopping
Retailers engage in experiential shopping when

they make the pre-purchase stage less transactional and focus on providing customers with exposure to their product or service in physical locations. These retailers take a longer-term approach to making a sale instead of relying on volume. For example, Zivame a leading online lingerie store launched its first fitting room store, to bridge the gap and provide consumers with the touch and feel of the product. Launched in Bengaluru, the store allows women to come and get themselves fitted for the right measurements and then place the order online, at the store.

Instant Gratification

With information available at the touch of a button, consumers expect answers quickly and easily to satisfy their ever-changing needs. Traditionally, the gratification of the shopping experience would occur in-store after a customer had decided upon a purchase and leaves the store with the product/service. Consumers now have a different expectation throughout the buying process; they have expectations from customer service even before a purchase is made. For example Dunzo, an app based personal assistant, offers services like product purchase and pickup/drop exemplifies this trend by offering instant response to service query even before the money is spent.

Personalisation

Given the evolution of the shopper, Brands are searching for new ways to engage with consumers and build brand loyalty, of which a growing number is through personalisation. This personalisation could be in the form of a service such as

nutrition plans or laundry pick-up services, or even one step further in offering personalised food plans based



Blended store format offered by FreshMenu through their offline store at Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru.

on genetic testing. Companies such as, HealthifyMe offer personalised meal plans, weight-loss coaching and even customise solutions for consumers on individual basis.

Blended Store Formats

Gone are the day of “stack it high and watch it fly” philosophy, stores can no longer looked at like self-service warehouse. Greater consumer engagement enabled by technology also provides opportunities for creative new models to thrive. Selling via social media and social messaging (s-commerce), internet-enabled subscription programmes, pop-up shops and other innovative methods offer ways to tailor the transaction to the product being sold and to the consumer. For example, online food delivery platform FreshMenu opened its first offline restaurant at the international airport in Bengaluru. The 70-seater restaurant and all-day cafe is following the trend of B2C online start-ups creating

Omnichannel presence in order to be available at every customer touch point, whether it is online/offline.

Value For Money

For most consumers, value for money means looking for low prices, however, with increasing disposable income this viewpoint has evolved. Today's urban consumer is looking a quality of products along with durability and are willing to spend that extra buck. Some of the best retailers manage to offer high quality goods alongside the price competitive. The Future Group announced their Retail 3.0 plan to include opening 10,000 member-only easy day store. These stores will offer a higher discount on a variety of products with the added convenience of ordering through applications such as Whatsapp.

Seamless Checkout

Checkout is the last stage of the purchase stage, and lesser the time spent more valuable it is for today's consumer. Smart phones are becoming a must-have device for many and slowly the default screen for brand engagement and digital commerce transactions. Consumers seek

higher convenience in all parts of the journey and with the aid of technology, retailers are offering faster and more seamless experience in the checkout stage. For example, Perpule 1Paya mobile app, enables mobile app based self-checkouts and queue management solutions for offline stores which enables the consumer to transact seamlessly.

Last Mile Re-imagined

The consumers' quest to shorten and simplify the shopping journey, provides a great opportunity for the last mile. Their willingness to spend money to save time drives innovation. The openness and flexibility that the internet age has ushered in translates well to the new, ever-changing reinvention. Companies such as Flipkart and Amazon are offering products at dedicated pick-up centres. This convenient service adds to the array of options available to the consumer, to simplify the last mile of the shopping journey.

In conclusion, the framework for Shopping Reinvented Mega trend and its sub-trends allows companies to identify and evaluate various areas, which can be developed further by infusing the brand experience in order to connect with the customer.

Each 'stage,' 'node' can be assessed in isolation and measured. A company may only need to target one or two 'nodes' to achieve an enhanced brand experience and customer engagement. However, it does work best to consider the shopping journey holistically. In my opinion, we have seen that companies that are good at Omnichannel engagement do this better than others. **R**