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RETAIL EVOLUTION

Mattress, Sleep & Beyond

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- Selling Sleep as
an Experience!



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Retail Evolution Mattress, Sleep and Beyond

Consumer beliefs and behaviors are shifting fast. To keep up with—and perhaps even influence—those changes, retailers must leverage deep consumer insights and identify the new peak in order to sustain as well as evolve their business.

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WORLD OF SLEEP - Selling Sleep as an Experience!

The World of Sleep concept focuses on basic elements which would enhance not only the quality of sleep, but also give an inviting trend to the consumer with a pleasing atmosphere and relaxed, congenial mood

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The need for growing awareness, and action, on environmental responsibility has been accentuated a lot in recent years. The industry is embracing this wake-up call in a positive way

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FROM THE EDITOR



The mattress industry is evolving in response to changes in consumer buying behaviour. The mattress market is a unique and complex space where the strengths and weaknesses of distribution channels can be quite pivotal in the success and performance for any player and in turn for the overall industry. It is estimated that for every one lakh people, there are 11 mattress-stocking outlets resulting in almost 40,000 such outlets in urban India. Nearly half of them are furniture stores. One cannot ignore the presence of appliance stores (with preponderance in the South Zone) and furnishing stores as well. Towns with population of more than 1 lakh account for 66 percent of the mattress stocking outlets.

Average footfall at these retail outlets is significantly higher than average mattress sale. Retail players will have to figure out innovative ways of increasing conversion of walk-ins.

During the first few months of the COVID-19 crisis, there has been an acceleration of digital retail. Retailers with digital presence succeeded in connecting with consumers and offered product and services. Retailers with only offline (store) presence faced challenges in getting customers to their stores or reaching them.

Industry is going through this transition/transformation phase from a transactional buying to a more experiential buying which involves the right messaging, education, consulting experience and consumer's engagement with the product. And every

brand is trying to address this and struggles with the generic challenges in their own way.

Retail stores need to compete with digital retail, D2C, Omnichannel and Large Format Stores with elevated in-person customer service. Service can no longer be defined as a support for sales and be limited to generic efforts, such as greeting customers, handling complaints, and managing returns and special requests. Even personal shoppers, technical experts, and certified installers have become expected from most retailers of bigger ticket product categories, says Harvard Business Review.

This new emphasis on service needs to extend to the digital customer experience as well. Most retailers with roots in brick-and-mortar simply try to replicate their in-store experience online, but such efforts are not correct. Both digital and in-person shopping experience are two different categories of sales and customers may also be different.

As Comfort Times move to the fourth year of operation, we have re-designed our Editorial focus to accentuate its impact. In this 4th year, we want to tap the knowledge of our young leaders who can share their thoughts and roadmaps for modernizing the Indian bedding industry and taking it to the next level.

We trust you would like this approach of ours an interesting read and a welcome evolutionary direction!

Any thoughts or suggestions are most appreciated.



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ISPF VISION

- ▶ To promote the sleep products industry by enhancing consumer awareness on quality sleep, while setting benchmarks for its products and services.
- ▶ To represent the industry with a commitment to the society and the environment.

Centuary Mattress launches Sleep Rejuvenation Program

On the occasion of World Sleep Day, Centuary Mattress has announced its new campaign, Sleep It Off. It aims at making people realize the importance of better sleep through sleep getaways.

The sleep rejuvenation program is curated for individuals leading a fast-paced life that leaves them feeling burnt out. Under the campaign, people will be invited to a 'sleep it off' camp, where sleep experts will counsel them to experience the power of sleep-rejuvenation. The participants will share their experience the following day and pass on the baton by nominating someone they think is facing similar work stress, leading to physical or emotional exhaustion.

While people struggle to maintain a work-life balance, the campaign aims to highlight the importance of good sleeping habits with Centuary Mattress' range of products and insight into sleep as a subject of better health.

Speaking about the initiative, Uttam Malani, Executive Director, Centuary Mattress, said, "Since the past 30 years, we have been committed to putting people's health and comfort first. Even after knowing the importance of good sleep, our sleep habits have taken a backseat, given the hectic work schedules and other misplaced priorities. Through our new program Sleep It Off, this World Sleep Day, we want to urge people not to wear sleep deprivation as a badge of honor. We at Centuary firmly believe that the power of better sleep can rejuvenate you, uplift your mood, and act as a tonic. This campaign will allow people to experience what they have been missing for a while."



Sleepsia gets \$2 mn Impact Funding

Indian pillow and sleep accessories M2C (manufacturer-to-consumer) brand Sleepsia has bagged \$2 mn Impact Funding from its parent company Agile Ventures, a venture capitalist. Striving to explore the still untapped Indian Sleep Market, Sleepsia will expand its customer base in Tier-II and Tier-III cities, reaching at least 2,50,000 additional consumers, said the company. Furthermore, as Sleepsia is already working to reduce time spent on the supply chain by strengthening its production capacities in India, the funding will help the brand meet its short-term and long-term goals, it added.

"So far, we have served 200k happy customers. And now with the recent funding, we are planning to bring 250,000 more sleepers onboard," said Dheeraj Kapoor, Director, Sleepsia, adding, "We are continuously on the quest to develop unique, comfortable, and affordable sleep accessories for our customers."

Further, Sleepsia is also gearing up to establish full-stack customer experience labs to innovate, develop and research high-end and avant-garde sleep products. As opposed to the United States market, valued at over \$ 30 billion, the Indian sleep market is still unexplored, according to Sleepsia.



Nextt to connect Indian artisans to US Shelves

Arun Agarwal, CEO of Nextt, one of America's biggest home textile companies that sells bedding products to all the major players in the industry, is all set to launch a new tech platform that helps connect Indian artisans and craftspeople to specialty stores and designers in the US.

The B2B marketplace - Expo Bazaar - USA will launch next month as a joint venture between Nextt and Exporter India Exposition Mart Ltd, said the Indian-born entrepreneur in an interview with Dallas Innovates. This will be an online marketplace connecting small businesses and

artisans in India with specialty retailers in the US.

Describing it as "India, curated for the world," Agarwal said the venture has more than 200 people in India and leaders from large US Retailers, putting together a selection of hundreds of thousands of products, ranging from handicrafts to home décor. This is the first-of-its-kind online service that connects independent specialty stores and designers with handicrafts, gifts and home décor merchandise from India. Dallas-based Nextt is rated as a leading bedding company in North America.

Orlando to host ISPA EXPO

The bedding makers are ready to hit the show floor once again as the ISPA EXPO is all set to be held from March 8 to 10 at the Orange County Convention Center (OCCC) in Orlando, Florida. Mattress producers from all over the world would attend the ISPA Expo to connect with the people, products, ideas and opportunities that set the pace for the mattress industry's future, said an official press release. This is the only trade fair devoted to the bedding industry.

"The ISPA Expo is a terrific way for us to meet with prospective manufacturers to join our network of 80 licensees worldwide. We offer more brands and collections than other licensing organizations, making us a very attractive alternative for manufacturers looking to increase their business," said BIA president and CEO, Stuart Carlitz. "What makes our organization



so different is not only the multitude of products that our licensees gain access to, but also that we increasingly deliver sales to our factories."

This year's event will be the first ISPA EXPO held in four years, as the 2020 edition was dropped owing to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sealy Intl launches eco-friendly mattress

Sealy International, Inc., a major player in the global mattress industry, has announced that it is introducing Sealy Naturals, a new eco-friendly mattress collection made with responsibly-sourced materials.

The new Sealy Naturals mattresses combine environmental responsibility with the comfort and quality that consumers have come to expect from Sealy, said the company. The mattresses are created with 100 percent natural latex and ethically-harvested wool, and a cover made from a blend of materials including soft hemp and organic cotton, it said. Each Sealy Naturals mattress is also

built using a hybrid innerspring and latex design, and uses techniques such as hand-tufting, for a beautiful, durable and environmentally-friendly construction.

"The introduction of the Sealy Naturals collection embodies our commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility," said Scott Thompson, Tempur Sealy Chairman and CEO. Sealy is pursuing independent third-party certifications that will ensure Sealy Naturals mattresses are made with quality materials that are both responsibly-sourced and environmentally-responsible.



European market for mattresses to generate \$14,382.8mn revenue by 2030

From an estimated \$7,877.0 million in 2021, the European mattress market revenue is set to rise to \$14,382.8 million by 2030, at a 6.9 percent CAGR between 2021 and 2030, according to the market research report published by P&S Intelligence. The key factor behind this would be the rising purchasing power of people in the continent, which is not only allowing them to buy premium-quality mattresses but also replace them more frequently than before, said an official press release.

This also enables people to purchase customized mattresses, which are priced higher than standard ones. Several companies are now giving customers the opportunity to modify the thickness, size, and firmness of the mattress and add personalized features, such as adaptability to the position they are sleeping in. Within the commercial sector, mattresses are majorly bought by hotels and hospitals, which replace their mattresses more often than residential users. Therefore, the booming hospitality industry is a major European mattress market growth driver, said the report.



RETAIL EVOLUTION

Mattress, Sleep and Beyond

Consumer beliefs and behaviors are shifting fast. To keep up with—and perhaps even influence—those changes, retailers must leverage deep consumer insights and identify the new peak in order to sustain as well as evolve their business.



Since the very birth of the modern sophisticated economy, retailers have played an inordinately crucial role in the commercial processes. Constantly striving to keep a healthy balance between manufacturers and customers' interest while also trying to capitalize from the ever dynamic industry, retailers are hands down the irreplaceable mediators to all business processes.

When speaking specifically of the mattress industry, crisply narrowing in on various retail trends over the decades and analyzing the same in relation to the overall transformation gives us a reliable look into the ever so compelling evolution of the retail realm. Undoubtedly, this is also reflective of the overarching development of the sleep product domain on both, global as well as regional level. So let's dive deep into the retail evolution to understand mattress, sleep and everything beyond.

The typical retailer format revolves around a traditional retail store, D2C model, e-commerce and Omnichannels along with Large Format Stores (LFS). But like everything, the watertight compartmentalization is breaking down to give way to more dynamic models as retailers try to nudge into a more experiential approach for the sake of customer satisfaction. To maintain a competitive advantage, retailers are experimenting and incorporating various models at a time. Then, there's also exciting things bubbling in the way customers absorb information.

Nowadays, a curiosity-induced search or an absent minded typo with the right SEO word like "mattress" is all it takes to have one's screen flooded by target advertisement as well as B2C content. Before anyone can tell, the customer is already filling their wishlist (virtual or mental) and is considering a serious buy. The advent of technological sophistication is penetrating and altering all the phases of a purchase journey. In this cotexture where AI predicts our actions seconds before we even think of them, how does an archetypical retailer fit, sustain and thrive to the max is the real question.

Online Vs Offline

If we were to take a second to fathom the immense opportunities that lie considering we're still relatively early into the stages of this tech-driven sleep product domain, it does seem highly likely that the element of "Vs." itself is questionable. Sure, the sudden flooding of e-commerce markets has given rise to some extremities but that doesn't necessarily imply a divided industry all together but rather a silver lining in the form of "mutual aid for mutual growth". It is only fait to back this point now with some sound probing.

Those who advocate online shopping of mattress or bedding argue that it is not just a big time-saver but also deters many hassles, from procuring the right product to getting it home safely. When opting for the e-shopping channel, a smoother experience aided by a reliable delivery system is quite a charmer.



In a world of consumerism the nature and psychology of shopping has changed and its impact on the retail business is immense

Moreover, on an online shop one gets to compare similar products on different stores, right on your finger tips! Sophisticated sorting and filtering options also mean one can easily narrow down the checklist and settle with the one that suits their needs best. When you have many alternatives to choose from, the selection becomes smoother in terms of finance and brand, they argue.

Customer reviews, providing a vivid picture, are almost like a renewed way of word-of-mouth advertising. Customers rely heavily on them during their research online. When it comes to the physical shop, the sales executive becomes the reviewer which is a boon as much as a curse. They possess more objective detailed knowledge but are also driven by personal gains, sometimes "adulterating" what is supposed to be their honest & objective advice.

So, when all these elements are taken care of right from the moment you think of buying it to the mattress reaching at your doorsteps, the e-shopping domain does seem almost undefeatable. But even though this entire shopping experience may be a "touch away" it does lack the "real touch" element that happens to be retail stores' forte. In fact the shifting trend towards a more experiential based and product knowledge infused attitude amongst customers is a big boost to the physical stores.

While it has created huge opportunities to reach out to the customers, the buying potential of the people has also increased considerably apart from giving them exposure to an



Most of the people who go for high-quality mattresses, especially the premium products, opt for the physical retail stores

array of new products.

A mattress is no longer just a material to sleep on and the bedroom is not just a 'sleeping chamber'. The utility of everything is now also defined by its overall contribution to the quality of life. Hence the "motive" behind the purchase also becomes deeper and knowledge backed in nature. The retail industry can surely capitalize on the same.

It is in this very world of immense possibility that the 'Internet possibilities' intruded, thus posing a huge challenge for the conventional retailers irrespective of their size. With e-commerce and e-tailing redefining the retail landscape, how to face the challenges boldly is the question that the retailers face today.

Innovation is at the heart of all solutions. Many manufacturers have been working hard to create a thin wall between their range of sleep products that they offer online

as well as in stores. They're also exploiting the internet through "the content wave" by providing not just product knowledge but knowledge about the larger theme of sleep, thus sensitizing, educating and converting customers, as well as directing them to the door of their retail stores and showrooms. Hence the "Vs." mutates into newer forms, more "complimenting" than "supplementing" in nature.



Mr. Manoj Sharma, Business Head Retail of Sheela Foam makes a very interesting point when queried about the retailers role in a D2C model: *"The consumer buying is fast moving towards a seamless journey between online and offline. Where exploration happens online, while experience happens offline. Retailers in categories like Mattresses, Beds and Cushioning can hugely benefit by aligning themselves to the complete consumer buying journey online to offline and complete the important fulfillment role, which requires touch and feel and customisation."*

The retailers' take

We cannot ignore the fact that online shopping has become the order of the day and the people cutting across their economical status rely so heavily on the internet, as they feel it is more economical, time saving and offers better options, all on your fingertips. However, when it comes to the purchase of certain products like bedding or mattress, going to an actual brick and mortar store is much better, feel the retailers who

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Though the industry has faced some setback in the wake of the COVID-19, the retailers are trying to overcome the hurdles through innovative marketing strategies

now face the challenge of the online market.

“Online platforms provide low rates compared to physical retail stores. Online stores can save on large warehouses, and can eye volume business which makes them compromise on margins” says Pradeep Kumar, who runs a major mattress retail store, Sri Balaji Comforts, in Hyderabad. He adds *“In my experience, most of the people who want to buy premium products prefer the physical stores because they can directly experience the products before making their choice.”*

While physical stores offer the possibility of trial before making the purchase, the online purchase is mostly based on the reviews, which can also be misleading, according to him. Sri Balaji Comforts is an exclusive showroom of a renowned mattress brand which does not sell via online retail stores, so the online poaching has not affected their sales much, according to Pradeep.

“At the same time there is a decline in the customer footfall in the wake of COVID-19, but we cover the business decline thanks to the customers who come for premium ranges of mattresses,” he adds. *“A mattress is something that one buys for long-term use and it also has an impact on your sleep patterns, so mattress shopping in person instead of purchasing online is more beneficial because one will be able to try it out rather than depending on other people’s reviews.”*

Different selling techniques

Truth be told the playground for online offline models is huge and it’s still a while till we can either safely predict or even arrive at a more concrete and stable structure. This exciting intermingling of the old and the new seems to hold a lot of potential for the industry.

However, the emerging trends in the market share of various models does offer an insightful peek into the evolution of the industry and what the future holds. The transition from a “transactional buying” to more “experiential purchasing” is very evident.

After all the mattress retail industry is waking up to a new and refreshing horizon all together.

Almost bygone are the days of “stacking and packing” retailing. Brands have been showing a rather enthusiastic approval towards launching exclusive showrooms. The effort and time poured into creating an innovative space experience



Closer look at the International Market

According to Center for Industrial Studies, the global mattress production is highly concentrated in a few countries. The fastest-growing area was the Asia Pacific which almost doubled its production value compared to 2010, increasing its weight mainly to the disadvantage of Western Europe. China and India are the first and the third mattress markets worldwide, respectively, and have shown a remarkable increase in terms of mattress consumption in the last decade, mainly driven by a fast urbanization process, an increasing purchasing power of an expanding middle class and overall improving living conditions. The hospitality sector gave an important stimulus to the growth of the market in both countries. In the last decade, imports from China grew considerably, mainly due to the increasing demand for bed-in-a-box mattresses addressed to bedding e-tailers and retailers offering this product both online and in their brick-and-mortar stores.



The mattress market is expected to grow considerably in future with online business playing a key role. The Covid-19 pandemic has given a boost in the recent past for online business

for customers is also accompanied by taking initiatives to tickle their minds as much as senses.

The aim is to hit the bull's eye by sensitizing and educating the consumers about sleep, it's benefit, relation to overall wellbeing and lastly to connect the circuit, relating it all to the sleep products by highlighting and causation aspect. Curating top class Consulting experience as well as enhanced engagement with products is at the heart of these brand outlets' mission.

Internationally, LFS have shown a steady growth and garnered much popularity amongst the customers. They facilitate not just the opportunity to interact one-on-one with the mattress but go a step further by using various elements like space, light, temperature, etc to curate an overall experience for the customers, thus taking personalization to

the next level. However, in the context of the Indian market, they were never really initiated with much aggression nor did they flourish excessively in places where they started.

Mr. Manoj Sharma, Business Head Retail, Sheela Foam makes a very insightful remark when probed about the viability of LFS model in India, saying *"Large format stores do offer the advantage of offering a wide variety of product categories under one roof. They also offer attractive deals periodically. While these are the attractions for the customers they do have the shortcoming of lack of quality interaction, customisation and limited reach. Customisation is very important for categories like mattresses and beds, where an "as is where is basis" often becomes a hurdle in concluding a sales transaction or ends up in a dissatisfied customer. As LFS are limited in their reach, the footfalls are limited by its immediate enchantment."*



Another remarkable trend is that of deeper penetration of omnichannel. In fact, the prevailing dynamic nature of the retail realm only makes it necessary. Master of all is the way to go! Wider presence also facilitates more heterogeneous reach and the opportunity to customize campaigns and experience accordingly.

As for the larger scenario of the Indian mattress market, knowledge is not necessarily followed by action. The manufacturing brands and retailers are becoming increasingly aware of the “experiential buying” phenomena but face certain challenges in making the best of it.

Apprehension on the part of the consumer to try alienly new things besides the lack of really tempting incentives to step out of their traditional purchasing patterns is a constant struggle. The internet revolution lowering footfalls is a wider phenomena affecting everyday business. Then there’s the lack of willingness or funds to invest in the retail sales executives training and improvement.

The solutions can be contextual but an overall theme of need for collaboration is a prerequisite in order to efficiently overcome these challenges. For example, sales executive training should be seen as the investment that it truly is. It’s initiation and responsibility can be shouldered by various stakeholders involved. Again, the internet acts as a true ally offering plenty of opportunity to innovate various stages of consumer experience.

Mattress, a thriving market

According to data available, the global mattress market is expected to grow considerably in the coming years and the e-commerce segment has a crucial role to play here. The reflection will be there in the Indian market as well. Studies also show that the number of online mattress sales skyrocketed in recent years, and it went up further in the wake

of the Covid-19 pandemic.

As of now the unorganized sector has a major share in the Indian mattress market, according to the studies conducted by various agencies. This sector includes a street-side shop and the local ginner. The unorganized sector accounted for 65 percent market share in 2017. However, the organized sector is now growing, with the increasing demand for good quality mattresses among Indian consumers. Indian consumers even prefer buying from international brands, whenever they think of high-quality and contemporary products. Factors including increasing disposable income, construction activity, and industry exports give fillip to the mattress sales.

Mattress Evolution during the past 10 years globally

- The 1980s were popular for innerspring beds
- Innerspring beds had a common box of springs foundation which is no longer a trend
- Older mattresses were much lower in height
- In 1990s the use of stretch knit fabric became more commonplace due to the ability of the material to stretch
- Mattress heights have also increased making for less pronounced movement when you have two people sharing a bed
- In the new millennium mattress industry started to experience online demand for the products and retailers started online presence.
- Future Mattresses can connect to all your smart devices with built-in sensors to track the health of the sleeper and to minimize snoring.

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Unlike the past, the competition has increased and the retailers have to use innovative business models using both online and offline strategies, according to them.

Identify New Peak Moment

As McKinsey puts it, retailers can nudge consumers toward new habits through product innovation. For instance, the COVID-19 crisis has spurred consumers to become more health oriented and increase their intake of vitamins and minerals. Unilever reported a sales spike in beverages that contain zinc and vitamin C. The company is therefore rolling out products and aligning its innovation priorities with consumers' emerging health-and-wellness concerns. Similarly, mattress retailers can give a 'healthy' spin to their product offering. Bring in innovation in display of the product, delivery of the product or a new payment method.

Indian retailers ought to also take inspiration from other international markets and innovate it to fit into the Indian context. For example sustainable business practices are not only the right thing to do but have proven to bring in a loyal customer base in many countries. The Indian mattress market using its readily available ancient knowledge and giving it a modern twist can definitely capitalize on the same. Duroflex's Natural Living range is a relevant example.

The Mattress Industry is evolving for the Future

Mattress shoppers (especially younger people) will increasingly prefer to do their shopping online. Brick and mortar mattress stores won't become obsolete, but consumers will be more likely to conduct research online before heading to a physical store. Consumers' expectations around mattress pricing have not changed much since 2016, which suggests they may be resistant to significant price increases. Mattress shoppers will increasingly purchase new beds due to factors including mattress deterioration, health and comfort, and the desire to improve their mattress in some way (for example, by upgrading to a larger bed). Mattress shoppers (especially younger people) will increasingly prefer to do their shopping online. Brick and mortar mattress stores won't become obsolete, but consumers will be more likely to conduct research online before heading to a physical store. Consumers' expectations around mattress pricing have not changed much since 2016, which suggests they may be resistant to significant price increases. Mattress shoppers will increasingly purchase new beds due to factors including mattress deterioration, health and comfort, and the desire to improve their mattress in some way (for example, by upgrading to a larger bed).

Future Mattress Industry Trends

The mattress industry has come a long way since its origins in the 37th century BCE. After a century or so of being dominated by just a few big brands, there are now 175 online mattress brands alone.

The prevalence of online mattress companies reflects one of the biggest ongoing trends in the mattress industry: Mattress shoppers are increasingly researching and purchasing mattresses online. This trend has been accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

As people increasingly prioritize a good night's sleep, they're developing particular preferences around mattress type, firmness, and so on. In some cases, these preferences break down along generational lines.

The mattress industry is booming, and it shows no signs of slowing down. As the industry grows in the U.S. and abroad, no doubt shifting consumer preferences will continue to play a major role in shaping the mattress market.

Courtesy: <https://www.mattressclarity.com>





The retail physical stores still maintains their presence and importance as they provide better quality of touch and feel experience to the customers even E-commerce portals are bringing the demographical changes in the market

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

The mattress industry has evidently woken up to a new level of retail. Currently, the approach to retail from the brands' standpoint is going through an exciting transitional phase. Bygone are the days of stacking practices, giving way to refreshing new methods such as launching exclusive mattress showrooms.

On the larger global level, Large Format Stores (LFS) are all the rage lately. However in the dynamic sleep product market of India, this format hasn't been pushed aggressively nor has it gained widespread popularity unlike its overseas success. Rather it is the exclusive brand showrooms that have steadily flourished and are leading the way for this wave of transition. Omnichannel is also being experimented with by many brands so as to smooth out the stir nudged by the e revolution.

Another noteworthy observation during this evolutionary stage can be seen in the consumer behaviour, a shift from transactional buying to a more experiential buying practice. This is where exclusive showrooms align perfectly with the customer behaviour and inclinations. The aim is to enhance both; customer's awareness as well as experience. This comes from dispersing useful information to sensitize as well as educate them. Increasing consumer's interaction with the product and engagement through consulting so as to personalise their experience to the max is also coming to the forefront.

The new thrilling opportunities obviously come hand in hand with added challenges. The industry faces the difficulty of changing consumer's mindset and facilitating smooth adaptation to the latest trends and methods. Considerate investment in retail sales executives' training is also becoming indispensably important. Then there is the disruption created by e-commerce channels and D2C methods resulting in lower footfalls. But the ever diligent brands and retailers are striving to come up with unique solutions with their mind set on enhancing customer satisfaction and taking the industry's growth to the next level.

Here's what Mr. Manoj Sharma, Business Head Retail of Sheela Foam thinks what we have in store for us in the next 5 years: *"Retail business in future must gear itself to offer a complete before and after experience that a modern customer expects. This is true not just for the physical hardware aspects but more importantly for the softer experiential expectations. Offering a seamless online and offline purchase experience, will require digital enablement and the use of modern AI inputs to stay aligned to the consumer. Retail fundamentals of right display, product knowledge and long term customer relationships shall continue to remain pertinent."*

The message is loud and clear: It is time for mattress retailers to evolve in these changing times and keep on finding new 'peak' moment which will help them thrive post COVID-19 era into a bright and comfortable future of the mattress industry. **CT**



What has the bedding industry learnt from the pandemic?

Online retailers witnessed a surge during pandemic in mattress sales because people were apprehensive about visiting physical stores

CCOVID 19 brought the world to a halt and encased us in a bubble. All one needs when cooped up indoors, dealing with home duties, meeting work deadlines, and twiddling thumbs is some comfort. That was the time when people were concerned about the comfort of their mattresses. Nothing was the same since COVID 19 including the mattress industry. The WFH arrangement became the new industry standard, and it had a significant impact.

The Inter-relationship between WFH and the mattress industry

Roughly about 60–70 percent of the workforce started working from home, and in no time, the bedroom was no longer just a place to sleep in, but it also became a place to work out of. Snacking while working in the confines of your room is no longer uncommon. Moreover, in pre-Covid times, the room was limited to being a set-up for 2 people, but since then, even small groups of people have been found spending time in rooms. Hence, people began using mattresses for a longer duration of time, which resulted its wear and tear.

Online retailers witnessed a surge in mattress sales because people were apprehensive about visiting physical stores. There has been a marked increase of 8-10 percent for online retailers. Ordering a mattress in the comfort of your house became a much more preferred option, and this inevitably led to ordering air conditioners as well, which were also delivered at the doorstep.

The increased demand for mattresses was supported with technological advancements which further made purchasing a mattress a hassle free experience. The introduction of box in a bed made delivering beds on any floor in any corner possible without a hitch, especially in metro cities.

The COVID 19 updates we hear on the news, read in the paper, and from our near and dear ones have made all of us more health-conscious than before. And beds are designed taking into consideration all the health-related factors.

Innovations in the mattress industry since Covid 19

Not so long ago, the mattress industry in India was dominated by the street side vendors who offered traditional, cotton and handmade mattresses. But that's not the case anymore there's been a sudden shift now because users are understanding the importance and the quality of modern machine made mattress. The International players in the market are gaining prominence and with that there are newer additions in the mattress industry.

One such innovation that emerged from this was 'Smart Mattress' which was made using Smart Grid Technology. This mattress distinguishes itself from others for multiple reasons. It is the first of its kind and takes the shape of the person who sleeps on it. Designed to offer comfort like no other, hard and soft just at the right places. It is equipped with 2500 air channels, ensuring that you remain cool as a cucumber



Since the outbreak of COVID-19, there has been an increase in the number of people suffering from sleep disorders. Many people are suffering from a disorder called "COVID" insomnia without even realising it.

throughout your sleep. Redefining sleep technology this mattress is crafted with care and preventing the user to suffer from any hip, shoulder, or back pain. The users are of the opinion that it's the perfect orthopaedic mattress and offers relief from back pain. The mattress redefines luxury with its cotton viscose cover and premium build.

Another bedroom addition that was well-received is a reversible blanket. Easily washable in a washing machine, it had admirable-worthy patterns sewn on it. Using one accentuates the room.



Sleeping soundly improves heart health, promotes concentration, reduces the risk of diabetes, decreases the chances of depression and betters an athlete's performance. Last but not least, it helps one remain bright and active the next day

Something that every mother chides their child for is dirtying the mattress. But that concern has been addressed with a bamboo mattress protector. Simply spread it on your mattress to prevent it from getting stained.

Latest happenings in the Mattress Industry

The future doesn't look so bleak and there are growth opportunities for the industry players. Young entrepreneurs have used this as an opportunity. Here's what Gaurav Raj, the co-founder of a mattress company had to say about the process of sleep and the changing attitudes of people, respectively. According to him, *'Sleep is a mere bodily process addressed with no care and hence sleep aid did not receive much focus. Customers don't spend much on it. The industry did not innovate. There were only cotton mattresses. But today, consumers have realized the importance of good restful sleep and are paying a lot of attention to how they sleep. The sleep aid industry has grown by leaps and bounds. Last year has seen more and more people preferring natural and healthy products in the bedroom.'* His is an online only brand, when questioned why, here's what he had to say, *'It is an online-only brand. Today, customers want to research before investing in a mattress, they want to know more and want to know directly from the source. The pandemic has made them more conscious about their health and the need to take care of themselves. They ask questions, visit blogs, and view video tutorials. Digital content consumption*

has shot up by 2x in the post-pandemic world. In order to be in line with what customers are looking for, it is important to design your website and marketing strategy to inform the customer about the product and the space you are in and thereby boost online sales. I invest actively in building consumer awareness.'

The mattress offered is all natural and made using only pure latex. It is eco-friendly, non-toxic, and chemical-free. The users of the product were of the opinion that it offers good back support. Being natural latex mattresses makes it an all the more preferable option.

Yet another entrepreneur, Rakesh Malhotra turned the pandemic into an opportunity. In the year 2020, he added to his existing product a line of products in the Sleep and Wellness vertical, which includes mattresses, pillows, and bed sheets. His aim was to save people from sleeplessness with environment-friendly mattresses that are designed to meet your requirements.

Changes in sleeping patterns and trends

Sleep innovation, "sleep health", and "sleep technology" are spoken about more often than before. This increased awareness can be attributed to the multiple mattress options that are available for users to pick from. But before

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When it comes to mattresses, there is no shortage of options, and the industry is constantly introducing new products.

you purchase a mattress, it is important to ascertain which mattress is best-suited for you on the basis of your age and ailments. For starters, a foam mattress, owing to its soft texture, is an apt choice for children. A latex mattress is a perfect choice to ease pain. An orthopaedic foam mattress is useful for combating back pain, fatigue, muscle pain, and arthritis.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, there has been an increase in the number of people suffering from sleep disorders. Many people are suffering from a disorder called "COVID" insomnia without even realising it.

The term is used to describe the stress that is pertaining to the virus and the fear that people are harbouring in relation to the changes that the virus has brought with it.

Life is filled with uncertainties, but quality sleep, to a large extent, can help counter these problems. Incorporating few rituals in your daily schedule can help improve your sleep pattern. You can schedule your exercise in the first half of the day or at least 3 hours prior to bedtime. Because exercising results in the release of a hormone called cortisol which alerts the brain and makes falling asleep harder. Its best to refrain from taking a long nap or else falling at night becomes a task.

Another thing that helps is sleeping when you are tired, postponing falling asleep is going to make it difficult to get any sleep at all. Even eating a light dinner makes falling asleep easier. Sleeping soundly improves heart health, promotes concentration, reduces the risk of diabetes, decreases the chances of depression and betters an athlete's performance. Last but not least, it helps one remain bright and active the next day.

Maintaining and improving your sleep health is in your hands. Hence incorporate sleep hygiene tips and techniques and choose a mattress that caters to your needs.

The evolution of the Mattress Industry since Covid 19

The mattress industry, like every other industry, recognised the importance of doorstep delivery, and as a result, since the pandemic, consumers have received this service free of charge. This benefited them because visiting someone's home opened up new doors of opportunity. The handyman providing the service may discover another room in need of a mattress, or it may be time to change the pillows. These salespeople ensure that the company is more than it was intended to be. Furthermore, mattress retailers recognised the importance of being responsive, and in order to do so, all customers entering the store were required to fill out their

contact information. This database contains the most recent updates and offers. Disposing of a mattress, like purchasing one, necessitates caution. The industry took notice and began disposing of old mattresses in an environmentally friendly manner. Most importantly, mattress retailers established a digital presence because digital is the way of the future. In the earlier days, purchasing a mattress involved visiting a physical store, and eventually, with time, the same mattress could be purchased on e-commerce websites like Flipkart or Amazon. But with time, manufacturers realised that's not enough, so they established an Omnichannel presence. This implied that the same manufacturers had a website from where the mattress could be ordered and even a physical store where one could walk in and choose a mattress of their choice.

There is an old saying 'there is good in every evil' that can be used as a consolation in this difficult and unexpected time. Every business had to undergo changes to adapt to this new situation. Indian Mattress industry just did the same. Industry worked on new delivery channel, brought in innovation, introduced new products to cater to changing consumer needs. **CT**

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

1. Increased awareness and respect for sleep products by consumers.
2. Consumers start paying attention to, and start spending on, home improvement.
3. Online sales pick up on the demand side.
4. Players start diversifying heavily towards online offerings.
5. New health-oriented offerings in high demand.
6. Industry started offering products via D2C, Omnichannel along with store sales.
7. Innovative products such as adjustable beds, weighted blankets, and back support pillows were introduced.
8. Retailers provided No contact Direct Home Delivery.
9. Consumers have started giving more importance to health and sleep, giving rise to the demand for modern mattress.
10. A good quality mattress helps to keep your veins healthy by promoting better blood circulation during the sleep.
11. Sleep health and sleep technology has gained importance than before.
12. Pandemic has made consumers more hygiene conscious.

WORLD OF SLEEP

Selling Sleep as an Experience!

The World of Sleep concept focuses on basic elements which would enhance not only the quality of sleep, but also give an inviting trend to the consumer with a pleasing atmosphere and relaxed, congenial mood



World of Sleep 2022 is an exciting initiative by ISPF in association with HGH India. Started in November 2021, it aims to take the sleep product industry to the next level by shifting from the narrow focus on mattresses as a simple product to the holistic experience of sleep and the utmost conducive environment that can be crafted through innovative products and present day knowledge for optimum sleep.

As the name suggests, the World of Sleep concept focuses on basic elements which would enhance not only the quality of sleep but facilitate for the consumer a pleasing atmosphere and relaxed, congenial mood. For a good quality Sleep, while a quality mattress would serve the main purpose, a cool and pleasant ambience around the bed would also contribute by inducing a strong liking to lie down and relax.

World of Sleep takes an all-encompassing approach to sleep, thoroughly giving attention to all the elements that constitute a good sleep, from lighting and temperature of the sleeping space to the pre-sleep routine and self-awareness of sleeping habits and needs. The intent is to sensitise and educate the customers as well as other industry stakeholders about the importance of sleep and the various factors involved, thus selling sleep as an experience.

The latest exhibition at HGH in association with ISPF was one strong step towards achieving the same. Extensive bedroom set-up were designed, incorporating some of the latest sleep product innovation, to fabricate a personalised experience for the participant. Special attention was paid to encourage interaction, which it triumphantly did.

In fact, it was a very vibrant exhibit with the latest global as well as Indian innovations, trends and products in regard with sleep. In the words of Mr. S Sundaresan, Secretary, ISPF India *"WOS during December 2021 was very impressive. Almost all the attendees appreciated the theme, display and the overall effect of the importance of sleep. ISPF had planned and installed a Sleep Expert to give valuable advice to the participants. It was the centre of attraction to the whole show."* The next one, World of Sleep 2022, looks promising too.

One step ahead

Retailers are the credible mediators between the industry and its customers. By keenly understanding customer's needs and challenges and drawing from their product-expertise coupled with knowledge of good sleep hygiene, they educate and empower the customer to make the best choice. Thus the upcoming exhibition World of Sleep 2022 aspires to help retailers understand various factors affecting the choice of sleep product and thereafter equip customers with better information.

As the world moves towards a more mindful approach pertaining to various products and their impact on overall well-being, customers are now inclined to weigh in a range of factors before their purchases. Thereby sound knowledge

The event showcased Sleep concept to the world in association with ISPF. HGH India provided a platform to showcase innovation in the sleep product for the industry that attracted more than 300 exhibitors to showcase their products

of sleep and associated products is the need of the hour for retailers. The mantra of WOS 2022 is simple: to sell the importance of sleep before selling a sleep product.

As Mr. Riyaz Sameja from Comfort Home Craft, Kutch (Gujarat) puts it very well in words: *'I really like this idea of selling the concept of good sleep, making the customer aware of their sleep needs and helping them choose what's right for them. It's like talking sense to our customers, making them believe that we know what all things will contribute to your sleeping requirements'*.

It is also crucial for a customer to not see this as a meagre transaction but grasp it on a deeper level as the long-term investment that it truly is, since it ultimately pays in the form of health benefits. Our complicated lifestyles are accompanied by modern research and technology, giving birth to innovative sleep products and insights. Deep understanding of the same is crucial for enhancing customers' sleeping experience.

Retailer Mr. Prajit Gajjar from Craft Zone, Rajkot (Gujarat) has shown enthusiasm regarding the initiative, saying *'This is a great work ISPF is doing, it's the need of the hour to have this work done in this industry, which has so little awareness, not just in customers but also in people who sell its products. We on our individual basis are training our staff, but we would like to enrol for ISPF certification of our retail staff, that can add value for our customers'*.

Today, a global awakening to the benefits of good sleep is evident as we are noticing a surge in technological solutions aimed at enhancement of sleep quality. Their accessibility and affordability are also seeing a wider reach. Smart pillows, mattresses and other accessories enabling personalization of user-experience are gaining momentum. We are also witnessing sophistication of gadgets used for general sleep monitoring to the ones specifically meant for helping with sleep disorders.

Monitoring the Air Pollution is of utmost importance in metro cities and is very true in densely populated areas. Here the latest technology in textiles provides bed sheets treated with chemicals and mere spreading of the same over the mattress avoids the need for air purifiers in the bedroom. Retailers are advised to have the full knowledge

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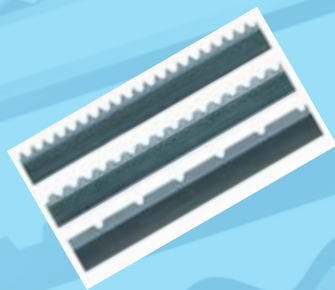
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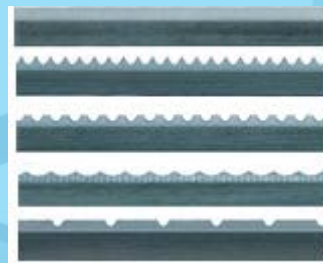


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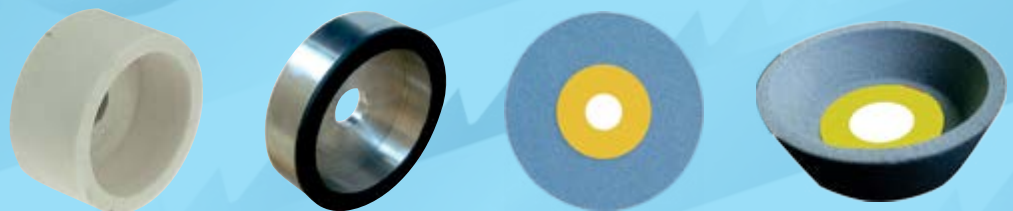
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of such accessories which would be of immense use for the consumers.

Sell sleep as an experience

The World of Sleep – Introduced as a joint initiative of ISPF and HGH India to offer today's populace sleep solutions. It is not uncommon for people suffering from one among these sleep issues- Insomnia, snoring, chronic pain, sleep apnea, shift work sleep disorder, or restless leg syndrome. An individual's sleep quality affects their overall well-being. Hence retailers took it upon themselves to sell their consumers 'sleep' rather than sleep products. It's safe to say that sleep technology and sleep health has never been this important before and it's a lucrative time to tap into the market.

International participation was limited owing to the COVID-19 restrictions at the time yet the turnout was encouraging. Mr. Arun Roongta the Director of HGH India stated, *'Agenda 2021, which was to bring the industry back on track, has certainly helped in filling that gap of demand and supply in the home business in home textiles, home decor, houseware and gifts segments. It was indeed a very encouraging and heart-warming edition of HGH India which marked the 10th anniversary*

of the show.'

"The trade show for the first time showcased the World of Sleep concept in association with ISPF. The World of Sleep concept was to promote the importance of sleep. Mattress and related products like pillows, comforters and sleep accessories were showcased in the trade show," he added.

Some of the leading brands from the Indian mattress industry showcased their Sleep, Home and sustainability products in the trade show. Industry felt that HGH India is a platform to showcase innovation in the sleep product which can help people sleep better.

Many delegates like Miss. Babette Desfossez, Trade & Investment Commissioner at Embassy of Belgium have shown keenness for these initiatives and the weightage they carry: *"It will be interesting to know how market research is done and the way the results of it shape the bedding industry. This issue is the same all over the globe regarding unawareness. In the west people value the mattress more than the bed, however in India it's just vice versa. We would like to associate with ISPF for market reach activities to understand the scope of the bedding industry*

in India.'

There are various other compelling information and technologies coming to surface that ISPF in association with HGH India aims to bring forth to the wider audience through its platform. For example: external noise limited to 22 decibels is recommended for a stress free and calm drowning in the sleep. New technologies are available at an affordable cost by acoustic experts.



Mr. Siddharth Gupta, Director, Unidus Associates-Acoustics, New Delhi makes an interesting point: *'We work for acoustic proofing, our research tells us that sound more than 22 decibels experienced on a pillow may hinder the quality of sleep. We understand the overall value of a quality sleeping environment for a good sleep. We would like to partner with ISPF for taking this idea ahead, it's still an undervalued subject and ISPF is doing a great service in spreading awareness on this issue.'*

HGH India 2021

The 10th edition of the four-day trade show for home products, which is held every year in Mumbai, was hosted in Greater Noida for the first time, receiving much admiration.

Annually, HGH India trade show is held with the goal of reinventing home spaces by creating a platform that connects Indian and international brands and manufacturers with retailers, distributors, interior designers, and purchasers. Undoubtedly, all those keen on exponential business growth circle this date on their calendar and attend the event. The home ecosystem is rapidly changing and the key players in the market use this platform to rewrite their growth stories.

The home industry is in the midst of a revolution of sorts because the demand for home-products in India has grown by 15-20 percent. In the past year, between July and September, there was a 30-40 percent increase in home-retail sales. Spending more time at home means people are more willing than before to spend on home-décor items, bed linens, kitchen appliances, and what no, to make their homes more comfortable and enjoyable. The market forecast ahead also looks very optimistic.

For the first time ever, this event was held in India Expo Centre, Greater Noida, Delhi NCR in December 2021 and even the succeeding one in 2022 is going to be hosted there. These are some of the key highlights of the event.

Spanning across 4-days the offerings in the trade show can be broadly classified in the domains of World of Sleep (Sleep Technology), Small furniture, Smart cooking and Swachh Bharat.

The trends that surfaced in the course of the event included:

- **Onwards reset together:** It is about uniting with each other,

The World of Sleep concept focuses on basic elements which would enhance not only the quality of sleep, but also give an inviting trend to the consumer with a pleasing atmosphere and relaxed, congenial mood. It aspires to help retailers understand various factors affecting the choice of sleep product and thereafter equip customers with better information

and being empathetic and friendly to the ones around us to tide over these trying times.

- **Greenfluencer:** Just like the name suggests, this trend stands for green living and slow living.
- **Good Vibes On:** No one around to share your sorrows with you? Turn to the web.
- **Home and Roots:** This trend is to champion the Indigo fabrics.
- **Golden Hours:** Their offerings are designed to make your Work From Home environment work for you.

HGH Future Forecast

The well-planned manner in which the event was executed and the warm-reception of the attendees has made organisers consider turning this event from an annual to a biannual one.

Since its founding in 2012, HGH has gone on to become an eagerly awaited annual event, and the trends that surface in the course of the event go on to impact future developments.

The HGH event for the year 2022 looks promising, and with the scale at which the event is planned, the possibilities are brimming. It is scheduled from 12th-15th July 2022. Wherein the first day is set aside for interaction between the HGH Plus members, trade visitors are welcome for the balance of 3 days. Its offerings are spread across 6 halls. Two halls (Hall 9 & 10) are reserved for the Houseware and Gifts section, in halls 11 and 12 one will find mattresses and home decor items, in halls 14 and 15 some of the finest and rarest home textiles will be displayed.

World of Sleep - wake up to new business opportunities!


The sleep-health industry in India is spurting with new business opportunities, thanks to persistent technological innovations. This fast evolving market is not something to miss. The success of HGH 2021 and the associated World of Sleep concept by ISPF is proof enough of the upcoming trends.

World of Sleep 2022 provides a handsome opportunity



to educate oneself about these novel ideas to further one's sales as well as customer satisfaction. As Mr. S Sundaresan, Secretary, ISPF India states *"Giving head to the feedback and the lessons learnt from the last years show, World of Sleep 2022 will be taking things a notch up by adding more features like sound effects, background mild melodious music, a T V to show the impact of Sound sleep with a video film. The overall planning is to make an impressive value-added pavilion."*

In fact, the excitement can already be seen building amongst all the stakeholders. Mr. S Sundaresan adds *"All brands have assured to support this novel initiative of ISPF, by displaying their new and innovative sleep products, those featuring health benefits like anti-bacterial, antifungal products etc. Also many sleep accessories like techno bed sheets to absorb pollutants and keep the air clean in the bedroom are new developments. Brands are also supporting in bringing awareness about changing the mattress periodically and send the same for recycling rather than discarding them in the landfill or municipal garage."*

The overall atmosphere surrounding World of Sleep 2022 looks very zealous and rightly so. After all selling sleep is a science and to stay updated with all the knowledge and innovation not only serves as an asset on an individual level but nudges the entire industry towards a prosperous future. 

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

1. The Word of sleep 2022 concept focuses on selling the sleep experience.
2. Customers are supported by the information for making better choice.
3. The mattress retailers need to educate the customers about the good sleep and various product advantages.
4. Today, people are globally realizing the benefits of good sleep. We are able to notice the surge in technological solutions enhancing sleep quality.
5. ISPF has taken an initiative to spread the right attitude and attention on sleep hygiene.
6. The sleep-health industry in India is spurting with new business opportunities with help of technological innovation.
7. The customer-retailer relationship plays a huge role in understanding customer wants and needs.


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It is time to redefine Sleep Health



Mr. Tushaar Gautam, CEO - Indian Businesses, Sheela Foam Ltd.

Mr. Tushaar Gautam next gen leader from Sheela Foam, speaks about current priorities for the Indian mattress industry

Q What are the top 3 priority areas that the industry should work on immediately?

Gone are the days of oblivious consumerism based attitude. Today it's cool to talk about health and wellbeing, the importance of sleep and the critical impact sleep products like mattresses have on the same. Consumers are becoming increasingly receptive to useful information. Hence it is essential that we pay special attention to the marketing communication style and revamp it to make our customers well informed, thus helping them choose the right products.

Good service! Never lost its charm, never will. Then again it has to be consistently good and accessible through all the stages, from genuine assistance in choosing the right products and delivery, to post-purchase periodic maintenance and D2C model support.

E-revolution is here to change everything. To adapt and respond in an innovative manner is the need of the hour for the industry. We ought to offer an immaculate online and offline buying experience by using the omnichannel. In fact, an omnichannel strategy that is coherent with the brands and retailers' goals could be a true game changer.

Q If there is one thing that we need to preserve from our legacy - from the first-gen leaders and pioneers of the industry- what should that be?

Our forefathers have strived hard to streamline business practices that are not only ethical inside the immediate industry but also to the larger realm of consumers and general public. We must preserve that at all costs. Then there's always been sustained enthusiasm regarding healthy competition and good relationships inside the industry. Even during the trying times of the pandemic, these qualities prevailed.

Lastly, "adapting to the future" has been an evergreen trend in the mattress industry. Even today, paving the way for the next generation consumer by crafting innovative products through technology and sensitivity is pivotal.

Q Are we ready for understanding the complexity and demands of the next-gen customer?

Yes. Surprisingly, it is the other way round. The pandemic accelerated the changes that were already brewing below the surface. Covid-19 disrupted economies and societies on both, micro and macro level, transforming people's lifestyle and the subsequent purchasing behaviour to a great extent. Now, consumers make more thorough inquiries pre-purchase and also go over and above to explore their options, thanks to the all reigning internet.



An elevated degree of self-awareness about needs and habits also seem to be evident, and so is the shift in attitude from “casual buying” to “experiential buying”. While the mattress industry had already invested heavily to set product advantage and innovation standards, it is only now that an increasing number of consumers are readily assimilating these advancements.

Q Does India have what it takes - in backward integration, supply chain strengths, indigenous self-sufficiency, aspirational bravery - to be on the global map?

In any industry, it is the market that proves as the central motivational force. All the recent reports and trends point towards a promising sleep product market taking shape in India. Besides, the obstacles faced during early stages of the pandemic made the industry look inwards for solutions and serves as an evidence that if we collectively strive, we can attain some level of self sufficiency and supply chain strengths. Yet it'll take much cooperation and investment on part of all stakeholders.

Q What will last, and what will fade - after the pandemic subsides - in terms of customer behaviour and digital disruption?

The focus on health and related products is bound to last. What would fade is the severe digitalization led disruption. The lines seem to blur rampantly between work, life and socialisation owing to excessive dependence on digital tools. While much of it will continue in the post pandemic era, push for a better balance between the evolving health crisis and digitalization as its dominating factor is apparent.

Q How much technology is too much technology for this industry?

You see the usability of the product technology for the consumer has to be higher. Secondly, the enriched product experience due to the new technology has to be sensed immediately. Naturally the credibility and adoption will go up. In the case of mattresses, it can be felt within 2-3 days maximum.

The success for any product lies in the sheer experience it offers either in its post-usage effect or convenience. So in the case of mattresses, the enhanced physical comfort and sleep quality experienced has to be evident and long lasting, only then can the involved technology be appreciated. For example it is the skin that experiences a good soap. Therefore, the experience itself speaks for the technology and product and is all the proof one needs.

Q What is your advice to a next-gen leader or emerging innovator - what problems should they solve?

Simply zero in on the consumers' experience. Also pay attention to the convenience aspect. The consumer should be able to easily locate and access the product from wherever and whenever. Not to state the importance of making presence evident in both offline and online realm. Lastly, developing sustainable products and practices should also be high-priority.

Q How will the industry be different from what it is today - in the next ten years?

There lie endless possibilities in this fast-paced, technology-backed environment. Artificial Intelligence, Beta, IoT, Facial recognition, etc will be driving the next generation of sleep products. The mood is also very receptive amongst the consumers and if we start introducing these now, the next gen seems more than ready to adopt them. **CT**

#phenkonahirecyclekaro

Mattress recycling initiative is going places

The need for growing awareness, and action, on environmental responsibility has been accentuated a lot in recent years. The industry is embracing this wake-up call in a positive way



India's first mattress recycling campaign pilot #phenkonahirecyclekaro, has been a major success in Bhopal and now moving to Hyderabad and Ernakulam. This initiative is jointly driven by ISPF and IPUA along with recycling agencies and sustainability certified retail partners.

After 7 months of pilot project, the initiative has now found the momentum to revive environment as the total number of mattresses collected & recycled increased to 800 with 60 dealers associated in Mattress Circular Journey.

In Hyderabad around 100 mattresses have been collected up to February 2022 and at Ernakulam, more than 200 mattress have been collected. Ernakulam will have an official launch in April 2022.

Presently this is being done by ISPF like CSR activity. It may take some time to make the project self-sustainable.

The entire initiative is effectively channelized the operational challenges associated with the campaign from collection to payment fulfilment to recovery & segregation of material to end transportation. This initiative is encouraging everyone in the ecosystem to opt for recycling mattresses.

Earlier the used mattresses were simply disposed-off by households or it goes to landfills, which posed a severe hazard to the environment. In the pursuit to take care of the environment, this initiative from ISPF and IPUA the old mattresses will be picked up from households by sustainability-certified retail outlets, on a call or WhatsApp request. This initiative has created a new channel among the consumers and households to dispose off their mattresses in a responsible way. Till now, there was no such option available for them.

This is also a great step for spreading consumer awareness to replace their old mattress for health and hygiene. With the increased replacement frequency of old mattresses, it will also support the bedding industry in business expansion.

ISPF plans to scale up #phenkonahirecyclekaro initiative to a PAN India level soon. The primary objective of this green revolution is to ensure that the used mattresses are not encouraged to go to landfills.

A mattress consists of a wide variety of recyclable raw materials like foam, cotton, coir, metal spring, or rubber. Each such material is then dismantled, segregated, and further sold over to the material exclusive recycling industries, thus generating the revenue for the recycling program's management.

Mr. S. Sundaresan, Secretary ISPF says "Since #phenkonahirecyclekaro is at its nascent stage, it is being sponsored by ISPF and IPUA. Our efforts are towards making this recycling program self-sustainable for gaining a natural rhythm of continuity. This will significantly help in regulating



To state the obvious, recycling is a very sensible approach to our mattress waste problems.

mattress circular economy for saving our environment and natural resources. The initiative is being highly supported by Municipal Corporations for its huge success. The Pollution Control Authority appreciates such causes that support the aim of missions like Swacch Bharat."

"Currently, lot of awareness activities have been organised by ISPF like road shows, canopy displays etc. to promote this initiative. The dealers have shown good response and cooperation. We feel that it will take some more time for us to spread the awareness to the consumers. ISPF would like to recycle about 10 lakhs mattresses for this year. Plans are being drawn to achieve the this goal. ISPF is in talks with all mattress companies to spread the message down the line and to bring around all the retail outlets to join this mega



program,” he adds.

Consumers will also get a discount redemption coupon as a token of appreciation for their contribution to environmental sustainability. They can redeem the coupon against any product from Mattress Circular Journey Retail Partners.

The statistics and consumers reviews reflect that the pilot campaigns are being appreciated and inquired by the consumers.

The initiative will promote the Indian mattress industry as a green industry. It will also help people to dispose of their mattresses in an eco-friendly manner, taking them towards sustainable living.

The Green Road Begins Here

At the global level, the conversation on Circular Journey of Mattress is getting more and more serious. And as we go down the ladder, we see the ways in which it is being translated at levels like sourcing, indigenous procurement, responsible distribution and responsible consumption.

In Optoro’s Retailer Sustainability Research on 128 prominent global retailers, it was seen that less than quarter of the retailers analysed, were implementing programs and adopting initiatives to advance the circular economy. Here 30 percent of retailers implemented product take-back or recycling programs for consumers.

Thankfully, the industry has begun its baby-steps in the right direction – which can soon turn into big leaps.

Let’s not forget that circular economy is not a flash in the pan but a deep pattern that is etching itself across the world, in many industries. The circular economy is as big as a \$4.5 trillion business opportunity, as reckoned by Accenture. However, only 8.6 percent of the global economy is circular – hinting at the big circularity gap as reminded by the latest Circularity Gap report from the Circle Economy.

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Vipul Kumar, Vice President and Head - Product Engineering and Sustainability · Duroflex

Sustainability plays an important role in Mattress industry as there is a big shift toward use of PU foam in Mattress, which is a petroleum product and gives much more flexibility and choice in terms of control to sleep comfort, light weight, long service life and affordability over traditional natural alternatives like cotton, rubberised coir or natural latex. The long service life attached to PU foam also becomes a disadvantage when we start thinking about 'End of Life' for these mattresses. These PU foams do not naturally disintegrate needing a focussed approach towards collection, segregation, reuse / repurpose or recycle of these used mattresses. As responsible

producers, most of the companies are extending their thoughts and efforts in this direction to find long term, sustainable and economically viable solutions for EOL mattresses.

As we all know, any sustainability effort starts with three pillars namely Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. So right from the design stage we need to think about the entire product life cycle "cradle to grave" by choosing the raw materials, processes, design alternatives, product packaging, transport and customer-delivery options which are aligned to these fundamental principles. Increased use of recycled or recyclable materials, use of greener and energy efficient production and transportation processes, reduction in use of natural resources, be it Petro-chemical products, cotton, coir or rubber, water, energy, fossil fuel is the way forward.

Every stakeholder – be it the customer, the producer, the distributor, the retailer and the recycler – each entity has its strong role to play in making mattresses better for environment. It is easy to continue the old ways – we all have our comfort zones that trap us in. But by making bold and mindful efforts, we can make sure that we get a peaceful night of sleep – because our efforts would not harm the planet, but add some relief and value to it. It is a disruption that has to come in a cohesive way – from all dimensions. And ISPF's endeavours can soon snowball into a big transformation where mattresses are friendly to the environment in every small and big way possible – from sourcing, to design, to production, to transport, to consumption, to lifecycle use and most importantly, at the recycling stage.

So it's the best time to join the crusade which is not just a good deed but also a profitable move for businesses, dealers, retailers, customers and other stakeholders. Being responsible is contagious- and helps everyone. In a good way. [CT](#)

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

1. The considerable usage and timely replacement of mattress is reasonable.
2. The enterprises try to reuse the old materials from a mattress for various industrial purposes.
3. The mattress manufacturer and mattress retailers are supporting mattress circular journey efforts
4. Consumers are willing to know about the sustainability efforts of mattress manufacturers and mattress retailers.
5. #Phenkhonehirecyclekaro campaign aims at recycling mattresses, by arresting them from ending in landfills as a burden already crumbling ecosystem.
6. The initiative will promote the Indian mattress industry as a green industry
7. Dealers received several examples and were educated mainly on how consumers will be benefitted from sustainability efforts.



The industry needs to CHANGE ITS WORKING STYLE



*Mr. Hitesh Mansukhlal Bakarania,
Director, Europa Foams Pvt. Ltd.*

Mr. Hitesh Mansukhlal Bakarania, *Director at Europa Foams Pvt. Ltd.,* speaking to Comfort Times, says industry is changing with customers becoming more health conscious in every sense. Excerpts

Q How do you plan to tap the health pillar in the portfolio and marketing efforts of your company?

Nowadays, health-consciousness is greatly increasing in the new generation. As a part of this awareness, and also as a part of regular portfolio of our products, we have already included some models like ortho; together with visco elastic as well as anti-microbiological fabric etc. Although also considering the current pandemic situation; after manufacturing any specific model we have started making it hygienic in the sense by spraying distiller over and above mattress protecting film. Also all the workers have to be sanitized, and they need to wear protective gear etc. As far as marketing is concerned the staff has been instructed to strictly follow rules to avoid direct contact with dealers and distributors and to focus over online marketing and contactless marketing.

Q What was your biggest learning during the last 2-3 years?

During the last pandemic phase, the way of living and the way of working as well as the way of thinking have been changed drastically. All the processes were followed inversely. A new era of customers developed which thinks about well-being as well as well-living.

Q How can the industry improve its contribution in India's sleep revolution?

The industry needs to be updated in terms of marketing, display management, product delivery up to customer satisfaction. Earlier, all the companies were engaged in opening retail stores, now retail stores need to be converted into online stores in order to make proper display management. Products were sold as is where is but now they need to be packed in a compressed way. Customers also need to be checked with inquiry about the experience of the product after use; or are allowed to return it if they are not satisfied with the product. In short, if the industry wants to improve contribution in India's sleep revolution, it needs to change its working style as well as put customer needs at centre in order to provide elevated levels of satisfaction to the customers.

Q Would you leverage technology in way going forward?
Technology has become a must-have in order to survive - so no way out.

Q What specific customer segment or product propositions you aim to focus on in the imminent future?

Today's customer is enough intelligent when it comes to knowing one's need as well as one's taste and choice for comfort. As per our opinion, tackling mid-segment customers will create a base for product as well as brand value. **CT**

LUXURY MATTRESS Segment & it's perfect skyward curve



What better way than talking numbers to get your attention, right? Well, Cut to the chase the Indian Mattress Market revenue in the Mattresses segment amounts to US\$251m in 2022. The market is expected to grow annually by 8.05 percent (CAGR 2022-2026) according to Statista. Under this, the luxurious mattress segment has seen a serious increase in popularity and is growing at the fastest rate compared to other segments.

It is thus very natural to play host to some questions. What particular factors have been the driving force for this change? What are the pertaining trends in the current market? Who are the key players? What's the customer profile? What lies ahead of us in this segment? The challenges and underlying opportunities?

Read on to not just quench your curiosity but to get some highly useful insights of the luxury market segment. Opportunities lie abound in the post pandemic economy and it's all about equipping yourself with the right information to make the best of it.

Self-explanatory

To an inexperienced eye, a luxury mattress might not be something easy to distinguish. But given a chance to sleep on it for a night, and see them become a firm advocate of it overnight. And who can blame them, after all luxury mattresses are made to maximise comfort and quality of sleep to the next level.

Luxury mattresses are super sturdy. They also strike a balance between cushioning and support, a requisite for a good night sleep. Special built-in comfort features like individually wrapped pocket coils, which conform to the body while reducing motion transfer, and high-density memory foam that eases pressure on hips and shoulders are abundant. And most importantly, the diversification just keeps on increasing to address even the most peculiar of customer needs. Thus, the product itself poses as a major explanation for its popularity.

Cause & Effect

Consumer perspective: Customers have become more mindful than ever, consciously analysing their own purchasing choices, habits and the underlying motive. They are looking at products from various dimensions, be it utility, aesthetics, durability, or whether it adds to their quality of life in the long run.

In the context of mattress, consciousness regarding health has been a leading factor for expansion of the luxurious segment. The marketing efforts of the manufacturers as well as retailers are also to be credited here. Efforts to sell sleep before selling the sleep products have been on an all time high. The resulting awareness in customers has pushed them to make better choices.

Mr. Nitin Gupta, Director (Retail & Channel Sales) for

The true purchasing power comes to customers from income level, which has steadily increased in the past few years



King Koil India shares a very illuminating observation in regard to the connection between the rise in the luxury segment and the new pandemic-induced lifestyle. He says *"People have experienced life-altering events in the past few years which have changed their perspective towards life. Those who can afford are eager to live in the present and spend on things which earn them a better quality of life now rather than saving it all up for later. This has definitely been a good indicator for our luxury mattresses' sales."*

Real estate, Tourism & Hospitals: Real estate with it's jacked up investment in construction, and revamping projects has given rise to increased demand for luxury mattresses. Growing housing demands in the residential market has also been central to this trend. Without much need for explanation, increased footfall for hospitals and health retreats has too helped cut a larger market share for luxurious mattresses.

Lockdowns and covid restrictions have made people value the outdoors and leisure more than ever before. People are extensively travelling, lending a big push to the tourism and hospitality sector. Hotels are thus on a full swing and have been investing heavily in top quality mattresses.

Macro economics: Awareness and willingness alone are not enough to make the real purchase. The true purchasing power comes to customers from income level, which has steadily increased in the past few years. It has let consumers upgrade to better quality mattresses.

Larger economic factors have also led to induction of



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About 70 percent of the global population in developing and developed countries prefer to sleep on spring mattresses

some of the world's biggest mattress makers into the Indian market. The entire Asia-pacific region has become a hotbed for investment (pun intended). This has played out as a co-dependent relationship: customers intrigued to buy luxury mattresses from new world-famous mattress brands, manufacturers eager to capitalise on the same by giving better options and offers.

Offline, Online: Mattress industry has quite swiftly jumped onto the e-commerce wave. Even though luxury mattress consumers prefer the full experience before making big investments and thus retail stores are their preferred choice, through the internet they can visit the official website, read up on their options, product features, understand their own sleeping needs etc, thus boosting the final sales. Hence customer satisfaction has surely been enhanced.

Runners & the race

The Indian market is fragmented with a large number of branded and non-branded players present in the market selling a variety of mattresses with local distribution channels. Even though the market is dominated by the unorganized sector, the organized sector is now growing swiftly with the rising demand for good quality mattresses among Indian

consumers.

The Indian mattress market is domestically dominated by players, such as Kurlon, Springfit, and Springwel, among others. Dream Mattress, Sleepwell, Peps, Duroflex are some other major and established players. There are also some new entrants in the market in the form of innovative start-ups such as Wakefit, Housefull, and Wink & Nod etc. This competitive landscape makes for a very dynamic industry spurting with opportunities.

What's trending?

Shift to organized sector: For a long while the unorganised sector, overflowing with mattresses of coir, cotton, and foam, has played a significant role in the Indian mattress industry.

However with the introduction of big international brands in the market, the modern Indian is willingly switching from the local "gadiwala" shops to thoroughly researched and developed, factory-made mattresses.

People switching to branded mattresses for its high quality, abundant options, and customised experiences is a trend quite evident. Thus it is an undeniable fact that the



In terms of sales of the luxury segment, the residential sector is the undisputed patrons, majority of which consists of the upper middle class and higher class Indians.

organised sector is swiftly but surely over taking the current market distribution.

Customers love customization: A very fascinating fact about Indian mattress consumers' behaviour is that almost 30 percent prefer custom made mattresses as compared to a meagre 5 percent of people abroad. Be it the tradition of getting one's bed made by carpenters (unique dimensions) or age old beliefs in Vastu, the trend still persists, and quite strongly.

It has sipped into the luxury segment as well and people pouring huge amounts into the purchase expect this level of service. The major players in the market have already started to level-up their games. Today, luxury mattresses come in all shapes, sizes, and designs to suit windows, yachts, bolsters, and for added products like L-cushions, chair cushions, and T-cushions etc.

The much needed bounce of Luxury Spring Mattresses: About 70 percent of the global population in developing and developed countries prefer to sleep on spring mattresses. In India its popularity is yet to reach the prime but this global

trend itself has helped give the manufacturing and acceptance of spring mattresses the much-needed thrust in the Indian market. In fact, amongst upper middle class gentry, luxurious spring mattresses are becoming quite a hype.

Selling sleep: Manufacturers as well as retailers are giving special attention to their marketing. They are not only concentrating their efforts on conveying the functional features of the mattresses and brand-building, but dedicatedly working towards spreading awareness about the positive impacts of a good night's sleep.

The mantra of Selling sleep, even though in its early stages is already doing miracles for the industry. Equipped with knowledge about sleep's health implication and resulting importance in wellbeing, people are now more than happy to spend more to get the right mattress. Luxury segment is thus becoming richly diversified and seeing a surge in demand.

The face of clientele

The mattress market is divided into three Tiers: Tier one segment is considered as a premium mattress buyer. The Tier-two segment is the top contributor in the overall mattress

World of Sleep

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market share as the largest buyer of mid and economy pricing segments. Tier 3 consists of Luxury mattresses which has the lowest penetration but is seen as the fastest-growing market in the mattress industry.

In terms of sales of the luxury segment, the residential sector is the undisputed patrons, majority of which consists of the upper middle class and higher class Indians. Post pandemic changes have resulted in a boost in the institutional sector as well. This includes hospitals, nursing rooms, hotels, luxurious villas & resorts, high-end government rest houses etc.

What lies ahead?!

According to a market report by Statista, the Indian mattress market is expected to grow annually by 8.05 percent (CAGR 2022-2026). Various positive indicators also point towards heightened demand for customized and luxury mattresses.

Healthy Competition: The growth will be accompanied by appropriate investment from manufacturers and a wave of new features along with a wider range of luxury mattresses can be very much expected to surge the market. Since the growth in the mattress market is largely led by an increased demand from residential units and hotels across the country, one can very much expect to see manufactures catering to their specific demands and embracing customization with full force amidst high competition.

Go green: Rising demand for natural material mattresses with hypo-allergenic properties is a very evident trend. Service providers like luxurious hotels chains, health resorts, villas, etc are paying attention to the smallest of details when it comes to their customer's preferences. The harmful effects of synthetic mattresses on being regularly used are also coming to the light.

When looking at the global scenario as well, people are making more eco-friendly and sustainable choices for the larger good. Thus natural material-based mattresses are in high demand owing also to the quality sleep and comfort they offer. These are projected to be major driving factors of the luxury mattress market during the forecast period.

The e-wave: Rapid increase in the trend of selling luxury mattresses through online distribution channels, especially on company-owned websites as well as global and local e-commerce portals is expected to create significant opportunities during the forecast period, for manufacturers and retailers alike. Companies are also pumping up their lucrative offers through attractive discounts, convenient payment schemes, unbelievably easy return policies etc to drive the sale of luxury mattresses on e-commerce websites.

Challenges & the underlying opportunities

When thinking long term, it is equally important to be realistic and look at possible challenges from a solution-based approach. Firstly, lack of awareness poses a constant threat to



any industry. In the case of mattresses however, eradicating it doesn't simply serve the purpose of getting rid of the problem but acts as an immense opportunity too.

Customers who are well aware of all the benefits of a good night's sleep brings, are more willing to make better choices and since better also means the one on the luxurious end, it simply translates to better sales and profit. For both manufacturers and retailers, it's no less than an investment opportunity.

Non-standardization (customization) of mattresses has been a problem that has plagued the industry for quite some time now. In fact, it is more difficult in the Indian subcontinent. One can never tell when it shall be addressed completely but the constant efforts in place give some assurance. Meanwhile manufacturers have used the underlying opportunity to undertake customization as a serious service.

The stiff competition in the Indian market has posed many challenges. However in terms of innovation it has proved to be highly beneficial and promises further diversification and a wide range of luxurious mattresses.

Bottom Line

In spite of occupying a small share, the rate at which luxurious mattresses are gaining prominence is extraordinary. With dedicated efforts from manufacturers and retailers, it holds the potential to take the Indian Mattress Market to the next level. **CT**

The pandemic has galvanised industries into thinking differently



Ms. Ratna Chibber, Managing Director, Kromatiks & Insulants

Ms. Ratna Chibber, Managing Director, Kromatiks & Insulants says, opportunities are waiting to be explored. She has shared her thoughts on several points with Comfort Times in her first interview. Excerpts

Q How well did the supply chain ecosystem of the mattress industry function during the pandemic crisis?
 There was a significant setback in terms of shortage of raw materials which escalated prices globally. Since quality is our priority, we focussed on procuring raw materials that were tried and tested and did not opt for sub-standard items. The lockdown was more difficult to navigate as it meant shutting down. Everybody was getting restless as remote work was not an option for a manufacturing industry such as ours. There is so much focus on getting the correct shade of colour and providing the appropriate solution to the customer that the lockdown was hampering us from achieving. Another issue was logistics, congestion at the port and delays in container movement. This led to delays in services and a slow down on the supply chain front. Exports were badly hit. However, since everybody seemed to be facing the same issue, our customers were supportive and rallied behind us.

Q Anything new that the industry learnt about gaps or improvements in the value chain?
 I think the pandemic has galvanised industries into thinking out of the box and in non-linear patterns to close gaps in value chain models. For Kromatiks starting with unsaturated polyesters which has been our backbone to several areas of epoxy applications and finally to polyurethane foams where customised solutions are being provided to the customer every day, opportunities are waiting to be explored.

Q What role does colour play in a good mattress?
 There is significant value addition that a colour imparts on applications such as elastomers, polyurea, shoe soles etc where a vibrant colour can transform the product completely. But there is no aesthetic role that a colour can provide in the function of a mattress as it becomes a part of the mattress that is not visible. However, colour does compliment the quality of the mattress in terms of its density and richness.

Q Tell us something about your strengths and Kromatiks is adding value to mattress industry?
 Our singular focus in Kromatiks has always been quality and service. The industry can vouch for our credibility and we are constantly seeking to learn, innovate and provide feasible solutions to the industry. Kromatiks is a brand synonymous with quality. When we launched colours for PU foam almost two decades ago there were only two other players in the market with a limited range of colours. We introduced a myriad assortment of colours with several shades of the same colour for the customer to pick and choose what they like best. Instead of offering formulations we give tailor made products. Kromatiks has always focussed only on colours and hence our tagline of Just Colours. **CT**

Focusing on Consumer Sleep Experience



The times are changing, and the mattress retail segment also shifting. This is the time to up the game and win the hearts of customers and convince them to open their purse. With a vision to enhance the Sleeping experience of the consumers and offer the finest of the sleep solutions, ISPF understands the significance of Consumer's Retail Experience and Customer Service.

The way Sleep is important for consumers, the mattress also plays an important role for better health. Since there is a lot of advancement in the mattresses, consumers can buy from a wide spectrum of customised products available in the market. Although Indian consumers have now started understanding the importance of a sound sleep, health benefits from sleep, and are actively involved at the time of mattress purchase, they are still not aware of the importance of mattress as an ideal sleeping surface.

With the above insight, ISPF firmly believes that Retailers should first sell sleep before selling mattresses for enhancing the consumer buying experience. ISPF's Retail Training Programs are aimed at enhancing Retail Partner's skills on Product Presentation, Product Knowledge and Customer Service under the caption "Retail Partner Certification Program".

Before Pandemic ISPF has trained about 1,000 dealers

PAN India. During Pandemic, ISPF continued its services by extending this training program, with partnership with an external agency.

About 800 dealers were trained in the year 2020-21 hailing from 16 Cities. Apart from the training, ISPF provides training completion certificate to all the participants and as an incentive, all the participant dealer's names will be uploaded on the ISPF website.

According to ISPF secretary, Mr. S. Sundaresan, the vision of ISPF is to train 10,000 retail outlets in the next 5 years. *"A detailed plan is now being worked out laying a roadmap supported by all the brands. About 2000 retailers have been trained so far. The feedback received is very encouraging. Many dealers have reported that focusing on VALUE rather than COST has made a big jump in their revenues. Further the training has developed a large number of customers and a network to handle digitally."*

Year 2022 objective

The Objective for 2022 is to create 1,000 retailers as DEDICATED with excellent training. They will form a role model to others and will expand this brand year on year. Mattress being an EXPERIENCE PRODUCT, 80% of the sales are through the retail outlets. Hence the training has acquired immense importance. Further from 2022 onwards the retail partners will become a member of ISPF family and would be

entitled to many benefits like periodic newsletters, special tickets for mattress Expo shows like HGH, and other specific training programs.

Another interesting fact is that all brands put together will nominate 1,000 retailers for the rigorous training and will be provided certificates. A team of professional trainers would undertake this task of training all the retailers. Further, ISPF is also proposed to send a separate newsletter periodically updating the new marketing, technical and product information. Also, a good opportunity would be offered to the dealers to visit Retailers Expo on Sleep Products.

“Another objective with this initiative is to help retailers to increase sales conversion. Majority of customers who visit a store intends to buy a sleep product on that day. Training will

help retailers to identify the prospect and help in converting that to a sale. Training also provides soft skills needed to engage a customer” adds S Sundaresan.

“While introducing and presenting any product, especially the premium ones, we advise our Retail Partners to focus on three essential aspects of product presentation to consumers: Product Features, Product Advantages and Product Benefits. It is a must that the dealer should have a thorough knowledge and understanding about the products specifications and its benefits for the consumers so that they confidently guide the consumer on the aforesaid three significant points, which are one of the important pillars of a sales pitch that support to get the deal closed” he adds.

Year 2022 emphasis is more on product display and

“
When we attend the training sessions of ISPF – we feel the strong connect that ISPF has with their dealers, they always go back satisfied and with smiles with the warmth that is given by ISPF”



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consumer experience. Most of the retailers will keep mattress in a standing position and consumer can see the mattress but he cannot experience sleeping on it. This year training will emphasis on mattress display and invite consumer to experience it before buying it. Depending on the consumer height, weight, body structure and back support, retailer will suggest mattresses which suits him. Such consumer experience would be focus of training in 2022, says S Sundaresan.

Previous year training focus was more on consumer preference this year it is shifted to consumer experience. Along with this, we are focusing on Digital Usage, Retail Styling, implementation of Covid Appropriate Behaviour in retail showrooms, Display of products and Customer feedback after sales, he adds.

Apart from training, ISPF is also sharing marketing tips, trends, consumer topics through its newsletter regularly. *"The Retail Partner Newsletter, which is being distributed regularly, will give several tips on RETAIL MARKETING, display of products etc. In fact, RETAILING itself is an ART and plenty of guidelines would be given. This refreshes their old style of selling and would add fresh blood in marketing"*, adds S Sundaresan. 



POSITIVE COLLABORATION

Just the new thread we need now




Mr. Daveed Kuruvilla, Director, Restolex Coir Products Pvt. Ltd.

Mr. Daveed Kuruvilla, Director, Restolex Coir Products Pvt. Ltd. argues how consumer awareness, better cash flows, capital growth, fresh innovations and more dialogue can elevate the industry on many levels

Q What are your plans for this year as the third wave plateaus and business comes back on revival mode?
We've had a strong H2 for 2021 bringing a positive end to a year that looked grim due to the second wave of Covid. Our sales records were breached consecutively month on month up until December, so our plans for this year involve adding more capacity to our production. We're starting a new factory in the coming months and we've ordered additional lines of machinery with the aim of doubling our current capacity.

Q Does the industry need to collaborate on some areas to address some core problems or opportunities?
Collaboration is certainly helpful, being in the same industry, we're bound to come across similar problems and opportunities. Positive collaboration will promote healthy competition and there are many areas where brands can work together to help our industry grow stronger. For instance, credit is something we're used to, collaborating on trade receivables and stopping supply to parties with outstanding issues can improve cash flow across the board. Brands can work together on pricing, when raw material prices fluctuate drastically like they have over the last two years, coordinating price changes will keep our bottom lines healthy. Creating awareness about the importance of good sleep for good health is vital, this is something everyone benefits from - be it the customer or the company. High consumer awareness around our industry is what will lead to a healthier population along with market growth.

Q What impetus would the Budget provisions and directions give to your industry?
This year's budget comes with the promise of growth and strong commitments for capital expenditure. If this is able to create a strong consumer market then the benefits will be felt by our industry through an increased demand for branded mattresses and consumers who're willing to invest more on sleep. This is what we hope will be a by-product of the budget.

Q Any new market offerings or innovations you intend to explore soon?
We've been conducting a study wherein we track the sleep parameters of an individual across multiple mattresses in order to fine-tune our product mix. We've given selected employees a sleep tracker along with a mattress we wish to study. We measure their sleep quality and alter specifications of the mattress in order to get the best possible readings. We've been sampling different types of foam paired with varying base materials such as coir, bonnell and pocketed springs. We're soon going to collate this data and implement our findings in our mattresses as a part of an R&D process which will be a constant. 

Without sleep for 11 days, 25 minutes!

How long can you go without sleep in one stretch? The record in this connection is with Randy Gardner, who went without sleep 264 hours and 25 minutes in the 10th Annual Great San Diego Science Fair in 1964 in America, when he was a 17-year-old student. It was an experiment and he stayed awake for over 11 days, winning first prize. It was intended to analyze the issues of sleep deprivation and document it. The areas that they studied and documented included symptoms including irritability, taking longer to make decisions, and cognitive rigidity and other side effects including loss of motivation, higher blood pressure, paranoia, memory issues, mood changes, visual problems,



hallucinations and difficulties with speech. After this he had 14 hours of sleep before waking up to use the bathroom. When asked if he'd do it again, Randy gave a resounding "no", because he also had faced many side effects associated with sleep deprivation.

Why Mammals sleep?



Mammals sleep mainly for two reasons - to save their energy and restore mental and physical energy. However, the amount of sleep a mammal needs depends on several factors, including age, body size, environment, diet, as also the safety of its sleep site. It is observed that elephants are some of the lightest sleepers in the animal kingdom! On average, both African and Asian elephants only get around two to three hours of sleep per day in the wild, while elephants in captivity get a bit more at around 3 to 7 hours each day. Moreover, elephants have been

observed to only go into REM sleep every three to four days. Similarly, a giraffe only needs 1.9 hours of sleep a day. Tigers and infants sleep the same amount. On the other hand, most human infants need about 16 hours of sleep a day –about the same as a full-grown tiger! Interestingly, cats spend about 16 hours a day sleeping, while most adult dogs need between eight and 13.5 hours of sleep every day, with an average of just under 11 hours. But the sleepest animal in the world is the koala, which spends about 18–22 hours a day snoozing.

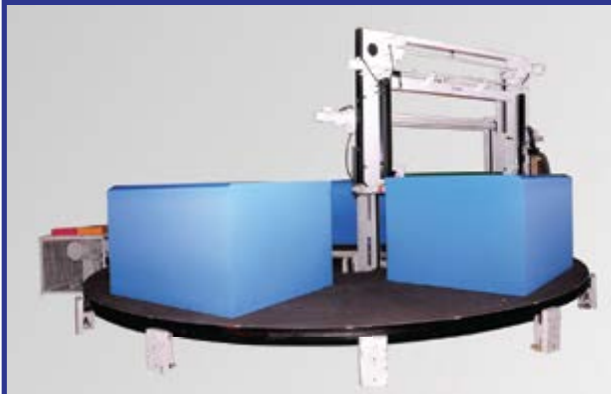
No living thing except humans willingly delay sleep

We all know sleep is just as important as diet and exercise, and it plays a crucial role in keeping us healthy. But, ironically, humans are the only ones who ignore the necessity of sleep sometimes. Humans often delay it in the name of their work, socializing and even the over indulgence in social media. Even though sleep patterns vary among species, getting some good sleep is a requirement for all animals. It is scientifically proved that sleep deprivation can destroy your health. You need sleep to fight off infections, support your metabolism to prevent diabetes, boost concentrations, and even repair your skin. Then, you know that lack of sleep actually contributes to increased wrecks of traffic accidents! So, make it sure that you get enough rest to be smart, healthy, and alert!





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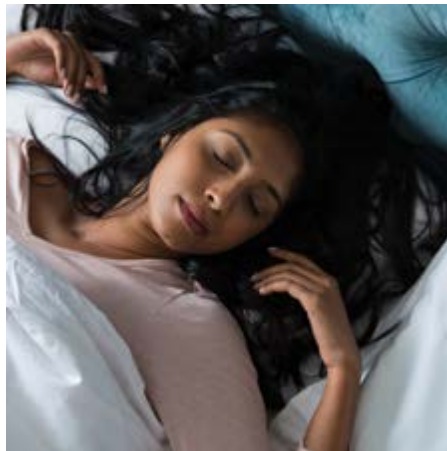
Who said you don't dream!?

There are people who think that they rarely have dream. But it is absolutely wrong and it is proven that humans usually have between four to six dreams a night. All humans, and even some animals, dream when they sleep, though not everyone later remembers what they dreamed. ! If you think you don't dream each night, it likely just means you've forgotten your dreams by the time you wake. Many sleep

scientists are of the opinion that dreams help your brain to process the events of the day, hence dreams are extremely important. Dreams can help you process what is going on in the larger world and in your own personal life. Since dreams serve important cognitive and emotional purposes, it's a very good thing that we experience dreams while we sleep even if we forget them when we wake.

Hypnic jerks and caffeine

Have you experienced the sensation of falling when half asleep and jerking yourself awake? It is called 'hypnic jerks', and there is nothing to worry about it, because they are deemed to be perfectly healthy. However, if this happens quite frequently and disrupts the rhythm of your sleep, then you have to be careful because it is the reflection of anxiety, physical activity close to bedtime or even the presence of caffeine in your body while going to sleep. Hypnic jerks are sudden non-stereotyped myoclonic contractions of the body muscles occurring during quiet wakefulness in individuals trying to fall asleep and during light sleep. They are often associated with sensations of tripping, falling through space, or electric shock. However, intensified hypnic jerks represent an unusual variant, when this becomes



excessive in amplitude, frequency, or both, it interferes with sleep onset and causing insomnia. So, prefer not to have tea or coffee during night hours and learn to relax before going to bed!

Why people dream in black and white

There was a study a few years back, which said 12 percent people dream in black and white, and older people dream in black and white more often than younger people. Interestingly, before colour television was introduced, only 15 percent of people dreamt in colour, it is said. The study conducted among two age groups with different media experience revealed that people who had access to black and white media before colour media experienced more grayscale dreams. While the research suggests that youthful exposure to monochromatic media may be a leading cause of black-and-

white dreaming, not everyone who experiences a color-free dream grew up before color televisions became a staple in every home. Experts suggest that the dreaming in black and white may have a symbolic meaning. This could be indicating that you have some unresolved issues from your past, and a problem in the present. It's possible that the black-and-white world you're dreaming may be an expression of how you feel in your waking life: As if you are trapped in a world not of your making, and you've given up your freedom of choice to play by someone else's rules.

No sleep debt please

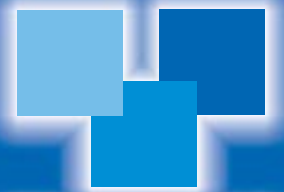


Sleep is an essential part of our health. People who get enough sleep feel more energized during the day, and their immune function is also better, apart from aiding the brain in processing and storing new information. For many people, getting enough sleep can be a challenge. Losing sleep is even more common in people who work in the medical field or other shift work jobs. Not getting enough sleep can have serious consequences and interfere with work, school, and driving and this is called sleep debt, which also called a sleep deficit. Sleeping less than seven hours per night on a regular basis increases the risk of diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and stroke.

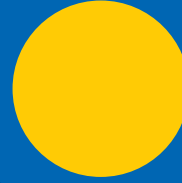
The easiest way to avoid the consequences of lost sleep is to avoid accumulating sleep debt in the first place. So, learn how much sleep your body needs and prioritize sleep as one of the most important ways to care for your body.



3 Decades of Expertise!

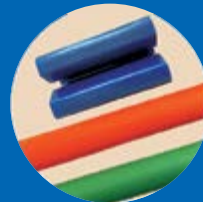


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