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by ISPF



How global mattress companies are managing COVID-19 situation?

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GLOBAL MATTRESS
INDUSTRY**THE BOUNCE AFTER
THE DIP**

The pandemic has shaken a lot of industries worldwide. Let us see how strongly, and where, has the international mattress industry felt these ripples. Let us find out what changes in business models, online channels, consumer behavior and product innovations have ensued after the crisis.

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Today's Customer is very well-researched

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It's fun to unbox! And romance customers

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Manjari Malani Dugar, Director, Relaxwell Mattress, India

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The Digital Bloom in Brand Marketing

This digitization of media has not only had a profound impact on how we consume media, but also on the way it can be used to advertise products and services. As viewers shift their loyalties away from traditional media, brands and advertisers are also reevaluating their stance in the new normal.



Mattress Recycling: What a Bed-Time Story!

The concept of recycling is not new. The mattress with huge amount of artificially made ingredients and chemicals once retired need to be recycled to avoid those potential threats to our mother earth.



The secret to healthy living: Good sleep

Sleep plays an important role in our lives, from keeping us alert to increase immunity, to so many else. Yet, lately, people are not sleeping all that well because of stress and addiction to electronic devices. With the COVID pandemic still impacting people, the importance of sleep could not be exaggerated in our lives.

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Using Big Data for Better Decision-making

There is a swift change in the way the data is stored and handled with the advent of computers. The programs are able to provide more insights by processing data. Big Data is the new tool for the industry for the better performance in coming future.



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Brands have to offer a wide variety of products because that is what the customer wants. If you look at the Indian market it is not a homogenous one, the preferences in the North are very different than those in the South.



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FROM THE EDITOR



All's Well That Ends Well is a play by William Shakespeare. It is often considered one of his problem plays, not easily classifiable as a comedy or tragedy. I think we are in the similar situation just like this play. We cannot say that COVID-19 was an opportunity or a curse for Indian mattress industry. Few international markets saw good demand for the branded mattress and some countries saw a dip in the mattress sales. This edition of the cover story is based on inputs from International experts on mattress industry and they have shared their experience with Comfort Times.

I am sure we all have learnt more in this one year than we could have possibly learnt in a whole decade. We have learnt to confront challenges like never before. We have learnt to cope with limited resources and brave ideas. We have adapted the old and embraced the new. But overall, the industry has re-oriented itself to not just the new constraints that have emerged but also the new opportunities that smart people have started scratching. A lot of innovations have found their paths this year. From manufacturing to supply chains to new customer service approaches to sales channels to a big omni-channel shift – the mattress industry has truly been bold and big in surviving the crisis with a new muscle.

In this issue, International experts have shared the worldwide impact of

the pandemic on this industry. We will see how various players, segments and approaches have found ways of redefining themselves. We will also notice that adjacent markets play a huge role in accelerating growth during uncertain times – like home improvement and healthcare.

The issue also traverses many other hot topics – like recycling of mattresses, the challenges and opportunities of opting for a sustainable model, the retail landscape, the tactics of simplifying brand portfolios in view of the increasing inventory management complexity and competitive realities, the importance of sleep for a healthy lifestyle, and a lot more.

I am very sure that, like always, you will be informed and encouraged by these articles and insights. Some of us may have already written-off the year as a dark memory but let's try to squeeze out as many take-aways as we can before we finally say a goodbye to it.

After all, there is a reason that 2020 stands for the perfect vision. Hope this issue captures all the clarity and visionary thinking that our industry has got out of 2020 too. As the proverb goes, "Hope is the pillar that holds up the world. Hope is the dream of a waking man."

Here's hoping to a better, brighter and healthier year!

S. SUNDARESAN



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- ▶ 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.



COVID-19 Pandemic triggers anxiety disorder

Telemedicine app Practo announced in a release that it witnessed a significant rise in mental health-related queries which grew 66.5 percent since last year (October 2019 to September 2020) and by 180 percent in the last six months. Of all the mental health queries recorded, 60 percent were from Indians aged between 21 and 30 years, followed by 25 percent in the 31-40 age group, 5 percent in the 41-60 age group, and 10 percent among those aged 60 and above. The survey reported that bereavement, isolation, loss of income, fear are triggering mental health conditions or exacerbating existing ones and many people may be facing increased levels of alcohol and drug use, insomnia, and anxiety.

The pandemic has led to an increase in the demand for mental health services, however, there is an urgent need to improve the budget allocation and funding towards mental health for better awareness and effective implementation of the programs. In a similar effort, Oxford University research, the UK based CoroNerve has decided to collect data with the help of various clinical reports to map neurological disorders in Coronavirus patients to eventually come out with a much larger database on the issue.

Sleep Apnoea may increase the risk for COVID-19 patients

A new study has found that people diagnosed with obstructive sleep apnoea could be at increased risk of adverse outcomes from COVID-19. The study, from the University of Warwick, is published in the journal *Sleep Medicine Reviews*. The conclusion is drawn from a systematic review of studies that reported outcomes for COVID-19 patients that were also diagnosed with obstructive sleep apnoea. Published in the journal *Sleep Medicine Reviews*, the review highlights the need to further investigate the impact of the virus on those with the sleep condition and to better identify those currently undiagnosed with it. Among various

factors that make certain groups of



people more vulnerable to severe COVID-19 outcomes is obstructive sleep apnoea. This is a condition that causes a pause in breathing, where a person is asleep. Many of the risk factors and comorbidities associated with sleep apnoea, such as diabetes, obesity and hypertension, are similar to those related to poor COVID-19 outcomes.

Emma Mattress to invest €100 million in the Indian and Asia-Pacific markets
German mattress brand Emma said it is considering investing €100 million in the Indian and Asia-Pacific markets to cash in on the rising demand for bed-in-a-box products. The company is evaluating acquisition of multiple local suppliers and manufacturers in India, it said. A major chunk of the investment is being considered for setting Emma's manufacturing hub that will cater to the US, Europe and Asia-Pacific markets. Emma said it will set up larger warehouses and create a new office in India.



SleepX highlights the need for mattress hygiene with a new campaign
SleepX has announced the launch of a new campaign titled '#NotInMyBed'. The campaign humorously targets millennials whose lives revolve around exploring the unexplored through their hyper-connected dating and social media connections. The brand connects with the youth through this innovative campaign by portraying the germs and microbes in the mattress

as three creeps from the digital age namely - Social Bacteria, Mighty Dust Mite, and Clingy Fungus, who want to get into your bed. Through this campaign, the brand aims to put the spotlight on germs present in one's mattresses and how SleepX comes to their rescue by ensuring a safe and comfortable sleep.

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New Study Shows Connection Between COVID-19 and Sleep Issues
A team, led by Ghadir Zreik, PhD, Psychology Department, The Center for Psychobiological Research, The Max Stern Yezreel Valley College, examined the possible consequences the Pandemic and home confinement is having on maternal anxiety, maternal insomnia, and maternal reports of sleep problems among 264 children between 6-72 months in Israel. The study population included 120 male children, with a mean age of 31.27 months. Approximately 38 percent of the infants in the study were firstborns, while families had a mean of 2.15 children. The mean age of mothers in the study was 33.97

years old and their mean duration of education was 16.37 years. In addition, 54.2 percent of mothers reported a change in the family income because of the crisis. The investigators specifically explored whether mothers experience change in their own insomnia symptoms and child's sleep between pre-crisis and crisis. The investigators found a high frequency of maternal clinical insomnia in recent months—23 percent during the Pandemic compared to 11 percent in the 1-2 months before the Pandemic.

Study reveals an extra 29 minutes of sleep every night can help improve mindfulness the next day

Mindfulness is the ability of a human to be fully present and aware of where



the person is and what they are doing without getting overwhelmed by any of the situations they find themselves in. The recent study published in the journal *Sleep Health* on 1st October 2020 showed that sleeping for an extra 29 minutes each night can help in improving mindfulness. For this study, the researchers from the University of South Florida focused

on various characteristics of sleep and also the impact of the night's sleep on daily mindfulness. This study was conducted on 61 nurses, who play an important role in the healthcare industry and require optimal sleep and mindful attention while working. However, sleep deprivation is quite common in this population due to long shifts, lack of control over the situations and regular encounters with life-threatening health conditions.

Sales are booming as more Americans work and seek comfort at home during the Pandemic

Since the coronavirus pandemic shut down offices, universities and other public places, Americans have been spending more time at home and mattresses are receiving attention, according to company majors. Americans who might've otherwise taken a trip, gone to a sporting event or attended a musical, are shifting their spending to the place they're spending the most time. The shift is benefiting physical retailers and online

sellers alike, analysts said. Though they temporarily closed their doors in the beginning of the pandemic due to government restrictions, physical retailers have reopened with new safety protocols, such as using disposable sheets to allow customers to safely lie on a mattress in the store without worrying about disinfecting the surface. Other factors are likely also boosting the mattress business, according to industry leaders.

Mattress brand Koala slammed for moving manufacturing to China
Australian company Koala is moving production of signature mattresses to China. Customers have slammed the brand. The Sydney-based company came under fire from Australian businessman and Harvey Norman executive chairman Gerry Harvey, who said the company was 'dishonest'. The company, which aggressively targets millennials through social media campaigns as an ethical and sustainable bedding alternative made in Australia, will move the production of its signature mattress overseas to support its growth in Asian markets.



Bedding Protectors Market to Cover \$3 Billion Valuation in 2030

Based on these trends, the demand for bedding protectors across both residential and commercial sectors is registering a massive uptick. However, growth across the hospitality sectors has nosedived, owing to reduced tourism in the wake of the ongoing Pandemic. Despite this, growth is expected to remain sustained throughout the forecast period. According to MR's Bedding Protectors Market Report, global bedding protectors market is likely to expand healthily at a CAGR exceeding 6 percent until 2030, reaching \$3 Billion.



The pandemic has shaken a lot of industries worldwide. Let us see how strongly, and where, has the international mattress industry felt these ripples. Let us find out what changes in business models, online channels, consumer behavior and product innovations have ensued after the crisis

GLOBAL MATTRESS INDUSTRY **THE BOUNCE AFTER THE DIP**

The COVID-19 outbreak has not just redefined human health and survival but also challenged the survival strength of many industries. Businesses across the globe have felt the impact of this unprecedented crisis. Some have crumbled, some have folded, some have re-emerged with stronger muscles and some have undergone a total transformation.

While sectors like hospitality, travel and manufacturing continue to feel a serious brunt, verticals like e-commerce, digital media and healthcare embrace a surge in demand. The mattress industry, however, is a unique one. It has seen a mixed effect of this outbreak. Some pockets and initial months were not so heartening for sure but as consumers look at home improvement, health and personal care in a new light while also experimenting with omni-channel modes with stronger interest; this industry continues to evolve. Looks like it is all set to leverage this opportunity (which has come hidden as an unusual challenge).

Let us see exactly how much the industry has changed worldwide and how well will it resurrect after the immediate blow?

MARKET GROWTH – INTERRUPTED BUT NOT BROKEN



Suraj Ashoka, Analyst – Consumer Goods, P&S Intelligence explains that in 2019, the mattress market recorded a worldwide sale of over \$33 billion, predominantly driven by the rise in the disposable income in developed and developing nations, availability of affordable mattresses through the bed-in-a-box concept, and decrease in the replacement period from 9–12 years to 6–8 years. *“Further, the mattress industry is poised to witness a steady CAGR of four percent during 2020–2025.”*

If we look at some other think-tanks, as of 2018, the global mattress market size was valued at USD 27.5 billion and has been expected to expand with a CAGR of 6.7 percent from 2019 to



2025. The drivers estimated then were not hard to guess – rise in disposable income, surge in homeownership (on an average 69.6 percent across the globe), demand from the real estate for residential segments, along with a jump in appetite for home furnishings such as mattresses, pillowcases, and bed linen. In the reckoning of Research and Markets, the mattress can grow by USD 4.36 billion during 2020–2024 showing a CAGR of eight percent during the forecast period. Drivers include the expansion of commercial end-users and rising popularity of eco-friendly mattresses. It is expected that the global mattress space would be anywhere around USD 68 billion by the end of 2027.

In the analysis of Transparency Market Research (TMR), rising income levels, health awareness, new interest in home decoration, emphasis on healthy sleep, and attention to the importance of a mattress are reasons for triggering the growth of the global mattress market. A lot of players are expanding their production facility and global presence.

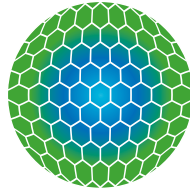
SHIFTS WORTH NOTING

Let us not forget that growth of the

healthcare and hospitality industries is also complementing the demand trajectory here. Residential users change their mattresses in 9–10 years, but the maximum cycle of hospitality sector is of 5–6 years for the hospitality sector. The commercial segment can easily expand at a CAGR of 7.1 percent over the forecast period as compared to the domestic segment. Interestingly, as per a recent industry report, the commercial segment can grow at a CAGR of 7.1 percent over the forecast period. Hospitality chains such as Hilton, Taj Group, and Huazhu Group are and a surge in demand for mattresses from international hotel chains will contribute to boost the segment growth.

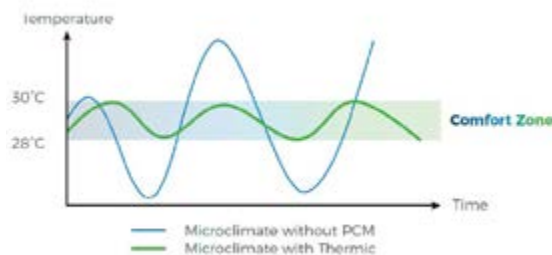
However, all is not rosy and sunny. Like any other industry, the mattress industry has been heavily impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in the lens of Suraj Ashoka, Analyst – Consumer Goods, P&S Intelligence. *“The lockdown measures adopted by various countries to contain the spread of the virus have hit mattress sales. Further, job loss due to this pandemic have risen significantly, which has led to a decline in consumer spending, as only essential products and services are being given priority. Initially, mattress manufacturers scaled down*

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their production capacity to 25 percent and started to focus on manufacturing face masks, which have witnessed an astronomical demand during this crisis. Later, mattress manufacturers, such as Serta Simmons Bedding LLC and Tempur Sealy International Inc., supported the COVID-19 relief efforts by donating mattresses to hospitals, to cater to the surging demand arising out of the increasing procurement of hospital beds."

DIFFERENT REGIONS AND DIFFERENT GROWTH

Globally, the impact seems to be still mixed and uncertain. But if we look at specific regions, we see that the industry has strong prospects in the next five years.

APAC alone is expected to expand at a CAGR of 7.3 percent from 2019 to 2025. Market demand would be especially hot for the innerspring and latex mattress segment, across the globe and countries like India, Sri Lanka, and China, are leading to the growth trajectory. The mattress market in Asia Pacific is expected to reach about USD 26 billion by the end of 2027. The mattress market in India has been estimated to gallop at a CAGR of 10 percent to reach USD 2.5 Billion by 2022.

Better levels of disposable income will certainly drive the global market in developing countries of APAC and Latin America such as India, Brazil, and South Africa. It has been observed that Brazil has a major share for the latex and memory foam mattresses market. In fact, hotels in these regions reflect a high demand for such mattresses. Ex-the partnership between Paramount Bed Asia Pacific Pte., Ltd. with the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel in Manila for premium-quality mattresses on a contract basis.

If we move towards Europe, we can expect a significant growth due to a strong consumer shift towards large houses and a growing preference for multiple bedrooms in the house. Healthcare and hospitality sectors in this region are also worth noting – specially for nursing homes, clinics, and hospitals.

As expected by the think-tanks, as of 2018, the global mattress market size was valued at USD 27.5 billion and has been expected to expand with a CAGR of 6.7 percent from 2019 to 2025

There is a rise in home ownership and home refurbishment in developed economies in North America and Europe, which is fuelling the mattress market. The restoration of the economy in developed countries of Europe and North America after the economic slump of 2008 has also been leading to an upward trend in home sales. Plus, the economic development in several emerging countries of Asia Pacific, the Middle East & Africa, and South America has propelled construction activities in these regions over the past few years. It is also helpful to observe how a spike in urban population in developing countries of Asia Pacific and the Middle East & Africa is propelling mattress demand.

WHAT GLOBAL EXPERTS HAVE TO SAY?

In an unexpected but huge way, the industry is enjoying the cascading effects that jump in other markets has brought upon. A chief among these complementary markets is the 'home improvement' market.

As per some estimates from the Home Improvement Research Institute, the market was already slated to witness an average growth rate of 4.2 percent for 2019-2022. If we look at the DIY segment in particular, the fillip from the at-home renovators would be huge too. Some projections made by GMIInsights reveal that Asia Pacific home improvement market will grow at a 4.5 percent CAGR from 2019 to 2025 – due to factors like booming housing prices in populated cities,

rapid urbanization, internal migration and an increase in availability of design options. There was already a big activity seen in regions like North America. High consumer spending on housing activities such as roofs replacements and home exterior alterations has been supported massively with advancements towards improved energy efficiency, superior designs, and enhanced durability coupled with a high intensity of natural calamities. All this has been generating demand disaster repair home improvement services. DIY segment could easily account for over USD 680 billion in 2025, more so, after the renewed interest that has been spurred by the pandemic and more and more people spending time at homes instead of outdoors.



Mr. Remy Tack, CEO, Global Textile Alliance Inc. shares, *"The situation is different for every region in the world. From our own point of view, we have learnt to work from week-to-week, as per the earlier phase of the pandemic, and then to operate in the second wave where companies are working even during on-and-off lockdowns. The economy will get back on its feet – slowly and little by little, hopefully. The impact on performance and targets varies from country to country and whether companies and retail can open up even during lockdowns where general movement is restricted."*



Like all manufacturers, our production is primarily dependent on manpower labor and raw materials, shares Mr. Paul Block, President-International Sales, Global System Group. *"Early COVID-19 restrictions severely cut resources and forced labor cutbacks in every part of the supply chain. For a supplier positioned in the middle of that supply chain, the strain on our upstream providers are affecting our production schedules, and, in turn, affected our downstream customers. At this point we have successfully moved beyond most of those restrictions. Also, the United States mattress market is recovering well. It is a strong market for us."*

- Consumers are nesting, as echoed by recent data from the online home remodeling platform Houzz which reported a 58 percent uptick in project leads for home professionals as of June with more and more consumers looking to add pools, spas, decks, patios etc.
- People are spending more at places like HomeDepot (it reported that Q2 sales went up 23.4 percent year over year to \$38.1 billion) and have shown a specific interest in remodeling projects.



"The crisis began in March. In the beginning some impact was felt for about three months in our parts of the globe.

But gradually factories started to open. August and September sales picked up. In Europe there was a huge demand. This year the booking period is three-to-four months - which is quite different from the normal pattern which is one or one and a-half months. We sell to the US, European and Middle Eastern markets. Now, the European market is powerful. Seventy to eighty percent of our production is going to Europe" says, Mr. Aydin Aydin, Brand Coordinator, BoyTeks.



"People are not able to go to stores, but online sales are showing strong growth. People are not able to step out, but they are able to buy from the Internet. Of course, some fairs have been cancelled but COVID-19's impact on mattress sales, at an overall level, is not too negative. But is a bit vague. Mattresses can still be put in warehouses. Even if ask our customers for forecasts, they are not able to give a clear picture. So far sales are going well for mattress producers. We don't know what will happen next year."

points out Mr. Ozgun Organ Alkol, Area Sales Coordinator, BoyTeks.

As Mr. Albert Garry Beard, CMD of A.H. Beard (Holdings) Pty Ltd shares, *"We projected some drop in April sales*



after the pandemic hit everyone. The running of the company became a day-to-day exercise. We had information coming

in from government on various aspects. Health and well-being of people was the number one priority. The next priority was to maintain supplies and satisfy our customers. People were at home and were saving money. Travel came to a standstill. Being confined to home, people decided to invest in better-quality beds. So, we benefitted from May to October sales as well as customer awareness and purchase cycle. We feel positive on many fronts. We have also seen suppliers working more closely all around the world and a big improvement in communication globally."



It seems to be a global pattern. From Australia too, Mr. Frank van Gogh, CEO of Joyce Foam shares a first-hand view. *"At first,*

everything slowed down in April, and business volume dropped by 25 percent. But within six weeks of the beginning of the pandemic, things changed. The mattress industry started getting orders again. The fundamental reason – consumer spending patterns have changed. The money that was spent on holidays and travel traditionally, has now been channelled into home improvement and the health category."

The industry is affected by some

other verticals in terms of immediate and indirect ramifications. *"Real-estate has stagnated, but home-improvement segments have generally gained during the crisis."* Opines Mr. Frank van Gogh from Joyce Foam who puts it in context of how some industries like tourism and hospitality have been strongly hit by the pandemic. *"They are running at much-reduced capacity and activity. Industries related to home-improvement or renovation or hardware sector, on the other hand, have done very well. People are looking at redirecting their activity and spending patterns from travel to other products and areas like second hand cars, pedal bikes, and home improvement products."*

People are buying more health, wellness, and home products as per other surveys too. Research published by the firm Resonate during the pandemic noted that home goods and furnishings are among people's top planned purchases. Also, seeking an *"upgrade"* was among the most common reasons people began shopping for a mattress. This was accompanied by other areas – like problems with their existing mattress and life changes like marriage or moving (as per 'A buyer's journey study', May 2020, by the Better Sleep Council, the consumer education arm of the International Sleep Products Association).

People have seemed to realize the real value of home, sleeping comfort



and yes, the value of self-care.

NEW SEGMENT OF GROWTH IN GLOBAL MARKET

On one hand the post-COVID-19 world would lead to a new landscape for mattresses due to rise in home-improvement demand and work-at-home trends; on the other hand, there is a new curve of growth being taken by some specific segments that were on the fringes before the crisis happened. Both players and customers were aware of the prospect of a luxury mattress or a medical mattress or a smart mattress; but now that awareness will translate into actual interest and investment.

Let's examine these specific products on detail.

Smart Mattress: Rise in back-problems and a surge in health-consciousness would drive this segment strongly in Asia Pacific region for sure. Increase in urbanization in the region, coupled with a jump in the affordability of mattresses is going to help a lot here.

Also, the key players of this market would be seen investing more effectively for making the efficient mattresses that address the health problems more significantly. The way Mattress Market Research Reports assesses it, a lot of key players are benefitted with joint venture and mergers & acquisitions

The post-Covid situations for the business would lead to a new landscape, due to the increase in demand for the specific segments such as Smart, Luxury, Medical and Organic mattress

for expanding the business premises across the globe. It identifies some rising regions such as China, India, Australia pointing out some strong rise in investments by the foreign Mattress Market Major Players in Asia Pacific region.

Luxury Mattress: So far, there presence was limited to premium hotels, luxurious resorts, villas, hospitals, residential accommodations etc. but their attributes are now opening interest in other frontiers too. Like pressure relief, conformance to the shape of the body, ability to spread the weight over the surface of the mattress, inflammation control, and relief for pressure points. These products are constructed using a variety of materials which include

memory foam, latex, innerspring, and hybrid materials. Many reports point at a surge in the sale of natural mattresses having hypo-allergenic properties. North America and Europe have been seen to account for a major share of the global luxury mattress market in 2019. The market in North America and Europe is also expected to grow at a moderate rate during the forecast period. This can be explained with trends like – the use of luxury mattresses as per the interior design and increasing usage of luxury mattresses made of natural material over mattresses made from chemical or synthetic material.

Even for the market in Asia Pacific, a considerable growth rate is expected due to factors like rapid urbanization, rise in sale of luxury mattresses on e-commerce websites, and rise in ownership of luxury homes, bungalows and villas etc. in China, India, Japan, Thailand, Singapore, Australia, and other Southeast Asian countries. We can see upgrades to portfolio of mattresses and more economical luxury mattresses in the market. There is activity on the front of mergers & acquisitions as well and players are signing agreements with regional distributors and dealers to expand their business in various parts of the globe.

CHANGING CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR GLOBALLY

As per a recent report on 'Future Consumer 2022' from WGSN Insight, the trends that were predicted for the next decade have accelerated to become part of our lives in a matter of weeks. WGSN researchers highlight how the pandemic has been a driver of change and has been forging new consumer attitudes. Among some key consumer sentiments, fear, eco-anxiety, financial uncertainty, and emotional contagion have been identified as the ones gaining traction now. A remarkably interesting facet here that industries like mattress and healthcare can consider for understanding consumer behavior is that of 'a desynchronized society'. Lack of consistent interaction has led to breakdown of communities. That means that the time-paths of individuals are now more variable and scattered. Also

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'emotional resilience' is going to define consumer behavior in a major way.

In 2022, consumers will look to emotional acceptance and gravitate towards dedicating time to feel – the report adds. Corona virus has given some time for reflection and people are pulling together to look towards a positive future. By 2020, 'radical optimism' will push through the negative and result in feelings of joy and pleasure. Optimism, as the report explains, is a brave choice in times of uncertainty.

In 2022, consumers will look to 'radical acceptance' and would be willing to experience life and themselves as they are. So instead of trying to optimize every aspect of their lives, they would be able to truly identify where they need to improve and allocate time/resources accordingly. When translated into business context, this means that the industry would have to induce simplicity in the consumer experience – from decluttering stores, to simple packaging to direct and concise billing. Note here what Lunar Analytics has reckoned – traditional stores will see a sales jump of 0.5 percent annually through 2023, but for 'limited assortment' stores, this jump would be higher – around 5.6 percent. Industries also need to augment the element of 'calm commerce' for the 2022 customer.

The second bucket of 'Settlers' covers those customers who are balanced, supportive, career-driven, hustlers, localists and environmentalists. This category of customers will gravitate towards hyper-localised commerce and sustainable or community-driven stores. Industry players can also leverage this area to drive conversions from leftover deadstock and fabric – a challenge which is a predominant concern for many retailers in the era of Covid-19.

The third one – 'New Optimists' – comprises of customers who are activists, adventurous, joyous, self-assured, on-the-go and with a 'pack' mentality. So, for brands, the take-away is that live-streaming will continue to be a dominant shopping option. More so,



Here's what the 2020 State of America's Sleep survey – the Better Sleep Council, the consumer education arm of the International Sleep Products Association, found — the quality of Americans' sleep has declined since 2019. The survey was conducted in January with a follow-up in March to reflect the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

About 37 percent of respondents reported waking up tired often or frequently.

A quarter said they wake up stiff, sore or in pain.

Almost 47 percent felt that they never or rarely wake up feeling refreshed

And 45 percent said they wake up at night often or frequently. Economic stress and fear of COVID-19 to an increase in poor health habits were major factors noted for these dips.

as this cohort is already oversaturated with online advertising, and more willing to turn to live-streaming. This can be for bargains or limited-edition products. Brands should also seriously invest in AR/VR (Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality) shopping experiences for this category. AR/VR enables 'New Optimists' to test products at their own

convenience. They also like it better as they find in-store shopping to be a chore.

Mr. Remy Tack, CEO, Global Textile Alliance Inc. opines that during the lockdown, in general, the customer is generally in a negative spiral. *"They are generally spending money on upkeep of the house. Some may buy a sofa or a mattress then and some may not. The market-dynamics do not change much once the markets open up – a 60-year old couple will stay go to a store compared to a 25-year old that will shop online."*

Let's see now how some specific categories of mattresses are merging strong in the Post-COVID-19 realm of needs and innovations.

Organic Mattresses: There is a notable jump in the demand for natural and organic mattresses. They are made from hypo-allergenic materials. As consumers become more cognizant of the harmful effects of synthetic mattresses, they are shifting their preferences to organic mattresses. Specially those who are suffering from breathing problems or who want to avoid toxic chemicals or those looking for an enhanced sleep quality with minimum effect on the skin and hair. Materials like latex, wool, and cotton are widely used here.

Medical Mattress: These are specifically

Retailers want to transform physical stores from places to shop into places to engage customers with experiences that blend digital and physical

Top Areas Of Investments By Online Retailers Over The Last 24 Months

Shipping, delivery, and returns

84 percent More free shipping offered to more shoppers

80 percent More tracking for shoppers of online shipments

71 percent Faster Shipping

68 percent Easier Returns

In-Store

75 percent Store-staff training

61 percent Mobile Payments

Operations and Technologies

79 percent Order Management Systems

73 percent Warehouse Management Systems

Marketing and Digital

83 percent Content marketing

79 percent Social Commerce

Source: "The State Of Retailing Online 2020," an NRF study conducted by Forrester

designed to help the back, joints, and the overall body. A rise in elderly population and need for hospital bed mattresses or therapeutic mattresses is expanding this segment. They can be categorized into innerspring mattresses, low air loss mattresses, foam mattresses, alternating pressure mattresses, bariatric mattresses, and lateral rotation mattresses.

THE BIG SHIFT TOWARDS ONLINE

How can we talk about the pandemic and not mention the big and deep change it brought in the way mattresses are sold and bought! Yes, soon after the 'bed in a box' disruption shook the industry, the outbreak and lockdowns nudged more customers towards e-commerce and omni-channel modes.

During this lockdown period, companies focused on strengthening their online distribution channels and reducing the losses incurred due to the closure of physical stores, points out Suraj Ashoka, Analyst – Consumer Goods, P&S Intelligence.

"The bed-in-a-box concept, wherein a memory foam mattress is wrapped in a box, has changed the landscape of the mattress industry, as well as the way a customer buys a mattress. Traditionally, mattress-specialty stores and furniture stores were the most popular distribution channels for these products; however, the introduction of the Direct-to-Customer (DTC) model has resulted in an increase

in the sales through online channels. The DTC model offers quality mattresses at affordable prices to customers. The U.S. is the largest mattress market globally, and according to P&S Intelligence, over 200 DTC mattress distributors are currently operating in the country." He explains.

Brendan Witcher, Analyst, Forrester also deconstructs the business case for digital store transformation in a May 2020 report. A lot of benefits roll in when a retailer chooses the digital store transformation route. Most retailers studied in this report believed that in-store customer experiences had improved, and some claimed to have seen positive business metrics affect results. However, some also found it hard to measure the return on those investments.

First, there are soft benefits like branding, customer satisfaction, and competitive differentiation. Then there are hard, measurable benefits, usually in areas like revenue optimization, capital efficiencies (e.g., cost savings), and operational efficiencies. Witcher argues that these benefits will be unique to each retailer depending on the customer's perceived value of the digital store solutions, the organization's operational structure, marketing's effectiveness in using those solutions, and myriad other factors.

While it is true that today, more than ever, retailers want to transform

physical stores from places to shop into places to engage customers with experiences that blend digital and physical; there are many new areas that they would have to learn to tackle. Turns out that when a player launches digital solutions in a store environment, it creates several interdepartmental dependencies, requiring individuals across the organization to play specific roles in vetting and addressing the benefits, costs, and risks that come with digitising the in-store experience. Plus, one cannot forget that digital store solutions require large investments in time, resources, and technology.

GLOBAL RETAIL BUSINESS CHANGE

The retail and distribution side of many industries have changed, and the mattress industry is no exception. In 'The State of Retailing Online 2020: Marketing, Omni-channel, And Mobile' done in partnership with the National Retail Federation (NRF), Forrester analyst Sucharita Kodali also adds some observations on the COVID-19 impact. What really stands out here is how omni-channel nimbleness will separate retail winners from losers. *"Some non-mall retailers have been able to offer curbside pickup, but mall retailers hope to be able to bring a few stores back into action earlier than others. Some of those stores, particularly those with light shopper traffic, may be able to serve as fulfillment locations for online shoppers. Retailers are also now forced to contend with situations they had not faced before,*



like longer returns timeframes and accepting store returns to their distribution centers. In any case, the pandemic, and its forced store closures (including possible curfews or limited hours even for grocers) mean that any merchant not already on the digital transformation journey will be left behind. Companies need to think about how to maintain business continuity for e-Commerce fulfillment: redundancy around high-skill roles, physical separation of workstations for safety, digital onboarding to get new employees trained quickly, etc.” Kodali spells out the serious need to walk this new online path with a high level of preparedness.

It is hard to argue the strong rise that online channels and omni-channel modes of sales have manifested during the pandemic – specially for mattresses. If we note what an August 2020 Report from Kantar-Amazon Advertising observes, we can see that home appliance and décor made up 33 percent in category preference for online purchase among new-to-Amazon shoppers for the next six to eight months.

The signs also indicate that 62 percent of offline shoppers are likely to start shopping on Amazon if the pandemic worsens ahead. What is a good insight for brands is here are the parts that stop them from doing so? The barriers are – Not able to see the product before buying (56 percent), concerns about damaged products or fake products and online payment

frauds (27 percent), and concerns about delivery/warranty/ installation issues (19 percent). Even unavailability of products on shopping websites or apps (12 percent) was a major issue. Brands that are serious to cater to this emerging market trajectory should spruce up on all these areas at the earliest.

Mr. Frank van Gogh from Joyce Foam feels that all conduits have been doing well. What is interesting is that the customers have started doing more research online and then going to stores. *“Today, it is not a store-to-store movement but online-to-store pattern when it comes to a purchase decision.”*

However, there is a big picture view to be taken here too – the total impact that entails both online surge and the offline sale-shortage. *“E-commerce surely benefitted during this pandemic phase. In our portfolio though it is not a big offset of the total portfolio. We saw some nice order-intake in online channels from a global standpoint, but it never made up for the shortage in other channels.”* points out Mr. Remy Tack, CEO, Global Textile Alliance Inc.

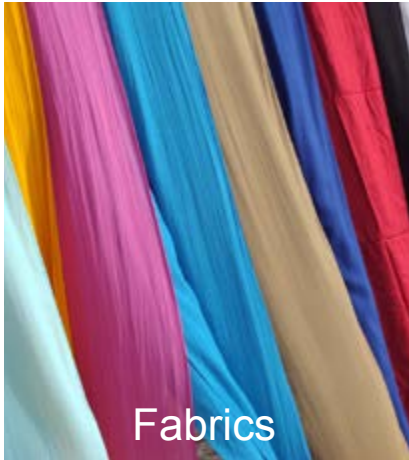
Mr. Albert Garry Beard, CMD of A.H. Beard (Holdings)Pty Ltd notes one more big shift in customer behavior, *“People spend on travel, TV and carpet first but now they are spending on the bed.”*

As per the WGSN report on the ‘Future Consumer’, industries should start to get ready for unified commerce.

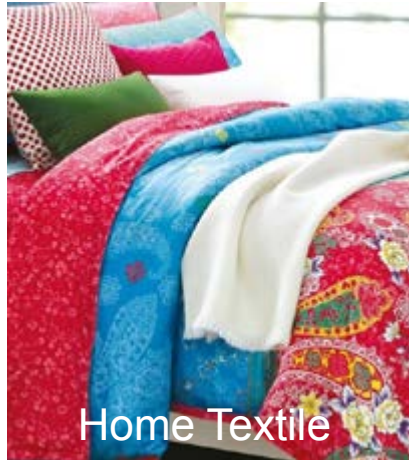
By 2022, consumers should be seeing its benefits. Unified commerce takes omni-channel’s many systems of record and merges them into one system, thus, creating one single seamless customer experience across all channels – in-store, online and across devices. The researchers advise companies to invest in a ‘feedback loop’ and the ‘less-is-more’ product approach. That means that customers should not feel overwhelmed. They should be able to choose how often companies reach out to them and what kind of offer they would like to hear more about.

The WGSN report also talks about driving focus to the ‘Second-tier’ cities. Large brands and retailers are recommended to look to micro fulfillment. Also, unified commerce will allow retailers to identify gaps in the marketplace and adjust product accordingly. Interestingly, 88 percent of shoppers are willing to pay more for same-day delivery or faster.

As the Mr. Paul Block, President-International Sales, Global System Group augurs, whether they are experiencing increased sales or not, mattress players would have to adapt to retailing with lower foot-traffic in stores and expand their online sales techniques. *“Even after the pandemic is lifted, consumers will retain many of their new online shopping habits, and social distancing practices that reduce in-person shopping contacts. They will better educate themselves about the product before entering stores and shop*



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The research and development initiatives and use of advanced technologies are the key strategies to be adopted by the industry players to increase the sales of their products



with a better focus. Another shift in the consumer mind set is a greater focus on healthy habits. Mattress brands that focus on healthy sleep conditions may benefit from this growing consumer viewpoint."

Not to forget, the industry will play a big role in re-injecting growth in most countries. Players have been forced to look outside their supply-lines in this crisis, informs Mr. Albert Garry Beard, CMD of A.H. Beard (Holdings)Pty Ltd. *"We have been strong manufacturers in this space. Government has realized the need for employment in the country to get the momentum again. Manufacturers like us are emerging as strong supporters of growth now. The 'new normal' is about much more awareness of health and well-being of people – and we must be active and vigilant in that exercise. The 'new normal' is also a lot about WFH dynamic – which is a big change relevant for the industry."*

As to the next 6 to 12 months, they would be quite pivotal for the industry, in the reckoning of the Mr. Paul Block, President-International Sales, Global System Group, "As the US market recovers from the COVID-19 lockdowns, pent up demand for mattress purchases have been strong. As other parts of the world loosen COVID-19 restrictions in

the future, and the public incomes are restored, we expect mattress sales to rebound in other areas as well.

There is a clear lot to this shift. As we move forward, we should get ready to see the influx of more and more advanced technologies – like the effective foam technology, or the biometric sensors technology, use of IOT-based devices, plant-based foam mattress technology.

HOW NEW YEAR WILL UNFOLD FOR MATTRESS INDUSTRY GLOBALLY?

While the crisis will spawn new opportunities and challenges for sure; the industry will still have to tackle the problem of standardization, unorganized dominance, and fragmentation. That is where top players will have to take the lead and iron out the wrinkles that have ruled the industry for so long now.

A recent Transparency Market Research's report underlines that the mattress market is influenced by the presence of many local and regional companies; and these players are going to encounter extreme competition due to the presence of several local and regional players. Main players are mainly investing in research & development activities and product innovation

to strengthen their presence in the market. A lot of strategic measures are being taken by top players - like product launches, partnerships, and facility expansions. Players like Tempur Sealy International Inc. have started offering the customization option to customers. Now a user can modify the thickness, firmness, and size of the mattress according to their preference. As standard-sized mattresses may not perfectly fit into customized bed frames, the demand for customized mattresses is witnessing a further jump at a global level.

Key brands are also amplifying their overseas sales structure by increasing their production capacities, with heightened work on technological development and product innovation.

FINAL VERDICT

It is observed that research and development initiatives and use of advanced technologies will be prominent players. What is also interesting is that there is a special focus on expansion and mergers and acquisitions are other strategies being adopted by these players. Analysts opine that the global mattress market will grow at a significant rate due to the growing demand for comfortable



But Mr. Frank van Gogh from Joyce Foam also cautions that the current uptick in orders may not reflect a real change in consumer behavior. *“As people begin to travel again, spending can shift back to that category. We may see a small slowdown again due to that re-adjustment.”*

It is hard to say how the scenario unfolds, adapts, re-adjusts, and redefines the industry next. Perhaps, by this time next year, the industry would be celebrating both the vaccine and this new injection that the market needed desperately in some hidden way. Growth will not fade due to the crisis but will find new avenues and inflection points. As people start to look at mattresses, their houses, their health, and their needs differently, players will follow suit. Use of technology will grow –as a medium, as a design element and as an experience point.

The outbreak could be written as an unexpected, but strong, chapter in the history of the mattress industry. The mattress industry would always remember 2020. But for reasons quite different than what other industries will sleep on. **CT**

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

The crisis has created a new wave of growth and innovation in this sector. The growing hospitality and healthcare sector are driving the mattress market at a significant rate, as per The Transparency Market Research’s report on the industry. It indicates how a surge in the number of hospital beds is supporting the further growth in the demand for mattresses. Also, worth noting is the way consumers are overly concerned about the interior design of their homes. It looks like they are opting to replace old household furnishing with new items to match the interior design of their residences.

and advanced mattresses across the globe. Additionally, the players also need to focus on leveraging the online platform to increase the sales of their products.

As Mr. Albert Garry Beard of A.H. Beard (Holdings)Pty Ltd puts it new marketing approaches and channels have been experimented in approaching and engaging customers – specially in product experience areas.

The crisis has created a new wave of growth and innovation in this sector. The growing hospitality and healthcare sector are driving the mattress market at a significant rate, as per The Transparency Market Research’s report on the industry. It indicates how a surge in the number of hospital beds is supporting the further growth in the demand for mattresses. Also, worth noting is the way consumers are overly concerned about the interior design of their homes. It looks like they are opting to replace old household furnishing with new items to match the interior design of their residences. This, as the report unlocks, is expected to contribute to demand for mattresses. Also, key players have been inspired to innovate and develop new products to increase their capacity and expand their footprint

in the global market through product portfolio expansion.

When the pandemic hit, mattress players all over the globe resorted to their own ways of embracing the first level of impact. Some of them switched to making personal protective equipment or hospital mattresses. Some pooled resources with network of licensees to manufacture masks to help fill the increased demand. Some suspended and shifted production but now the time is to resume activity and aim at the ‘New Normal’.

We cannot dismiss the impact of lockdowns, supply chain disruptions, demand destruction, and change in customer behavior which the pandemic has brought in. That is why the mattresses market in Europe will show a CAGR of almost three percent during 2020-2024, as per the latest research report by Technavio. This report also shows that the market remains fragmented, and the degree of fragmentation will accelerate during the forecast period. It notes how some key players have been launching several initiatives and introducing innovative products and services to cater to a larger target audience during the pandemic.

A hand is holding a black tablet. The screen of the tablet displays a white background with a faint, stylized globe and a grid of dots. The text on the screen is centered and reads: "The Digital Bloom in Brand Marketing". Below the title is a paragraph of text. The hand holding the tablet is visible on the left and bottom edges.

The Digital Bloom in Brand Marketing

This digitization of media has not only had a profound impact on how we consume media, but also on the way it can be used to advertise products and services. As viewers shift their loyalties away from traditional media, brands and advertisers are also reevaluating their stance in the new normal.

CCOVID-19 Pandemic has truly disrupted the world like nothing else. Every aspect of our lives has been impacted. Right from the manner, we live, to how we work. In fact, a vast majority of people are still working from homes or at offices in limited capacities. The epidemic has not only impacted our work-life patterns, but it also has the way we entertain ourselves, the way we interact with media. Take the manner in which the Over-the-top (OTT) platforms have exploded in the past few months. People are now watching Netflix, Amazon Prime, or even Zee5, significantly more than they are watching traditional channels. Even in smaller towns and cities, digital media is gaining currency over conventional media.



According to a report published by KPMG in 2019, it had projected that India would have a billion digital users by 2030. The firm has now revised its projection, stating that the milestone would be achieved earlier because of the digital acceleration that has been witnessed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. With broadband connectivity spreading to the interiors of our country, with players like JIO, this digital transition will only strengthen in the days to come. The future is digital, there's no doubt about it.

This digitization of media has not only had a profound impact on how we consume media, but also on the way it can be used to advertise products and services. As viewers shift their loyalties away from traditional media, brands and advertisers are also reevaluating their stance in the new normal. Take, for instance, one of the biggest victims of the lockdown was the print medium. Due to concerns related to safety and security, people had stopped reading newspapers. This resulted in a complete crash in the print medium, especially in the major towns like Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, etc.

The impact of the epidemic can be gauged by how the advertising spend declined on these mediums. According to WARC, digital advertising spends in the second quarter of 2020 dropped by

Digital entertainment platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Zee5 etc. have gained more prominence than ever in this country. With internet service providers such as Jio in the market the Digital boom is going to strengthen in future

just over one-third (35.2%) to Rs. 2,005 crores.

In comparison, print advertising spends fell by four-fifths (79.1%) to Rs 1,217 crore. This is the first time when the spend on digital has overtaken that of the print. In fact, in the first three months of the year, before the epidemic hit home, digital budgets witnessed a growth of 15.5%, while all other media saw a decline.

Traditional marketing platforms like print, broadcast, direct mail and outdoor advertising like billboards will continue to suffer in the days to come. Driven by low engagement levels and security concerns, brands will reevaluate

their relevance on a continuous basis. All these numbers point towards an undeniable fact; digital advertising is not merely an option anymore; in fact, it is the best option at the moment.

Digital medium and Mattress industry
So how is this shift relevant to the mattress industry?

It is very much. As much of the industry has relied on traditional means of advertising in India, the shift to a digital one would necessitate a recalibration of the marketing strategies. Over the past many years, mattress companies have relied on print medium, billboards and POS as the primary point of engagement with the users. Indeed, quite a handful have also dabbled in other mediums like TV ads, or digital promotions. But print and outdoor have been the mainstay of the industry. As viewers shift their allegiance away from these mediums, companies will need to relook at their marketing and advertising budgets, to ensure that they are spending money where sales are possible.

"Among the many things that have been impacted by the epidemic, the advertising and marketing industry has been the most. As companies move into a cost-cutting mode, advertising budgets are severely constrained. This means that brands are wanting a bigger bang for the same buck. This

has necessitated a reevaluation by marketers on their advertising spend. And for the first time, we are seeing companies giving more attention to digital mediums of engagement, rather than a traditional one," states Sudish Balan, Chief Business Officer, Tonic Worldwide.

Traditional Vs Digital marketing

Before we get down to the essential comparison between the mediums, let us understand how the traditional medium works and how it has been in relevance for so long.

In traditional marketing, brands try to identify their target audience, segment them and then place adverts where the likelihood of seeing, hearing or interacting is maximum. This is where things like print ads, billboards, or television advertisements come into play. Traditional mediums have been around for as long as one can remember, possibly from the times of cave dwellers, when they painted on the walls advertising their skills at hunting and so on. Thus, brands, marketers and advertisers have in-depth know-how of how the medium functions and how to use it for the advantage. There have been a lot of studies and research done to make marketing strategies effective, for instance, this whole theory of 4Ps by marketing guru Phil Kotler that talks about the importance of concepts like Product, Packaging, Positioning and

Promotions.

Yet, quite a handful of disadvantages exist when it comes to traditional marketing. The biggest issue is that businesses have limited or almost no interaction with their customers. There is always a go-between between the brand and the customer. Like in the case of advertising, there will be an advertising agency that will work the creatives, the newspapers that will carry the adverts. There's no direct communication unless it is in the form of direct mailers. So, the brand does not get to hear first-hand from its customers. The company will always have to bank on surveys or polls to get a feel, and even that is not all that reliable.

The growing digital media data consumption gives a new avenue for advertising for the industry other than traditional marketing platforms such as television and print medium in the days to come

Secondly, traditional marketing is also rigid. If you have created and aired an advert, there's little you can do about it. So, if there's some wrong information disseminated through the advert, well, good luck to you, as there is little you can do, you cannot edit a print ad once it is out. Or change a TV advert if there is any backlash or protest, all you can do is withdraw it. Traditional marketing is inflexible in that sense.

And finally, comes the price bit. For all the trials and tribulations, traditional marketing is still a costly affair. Television adverts are the costliest media spend for any brand, followed by print adverts, and outdoor advertising. If one were to weigh the returns versus the investments, it would always be a tough choice, especially for a product category like a mattress.

Advantages of the digital medium

Things are a little different when it comes to digital marketing. Not only is digital marketing quick and sharp, but it also is flexible as it allows brands to streamline and refine their marketing strategies for best results. Typically, when it comes to digital marketing, more often, it is the direct communication between the brand and the consumer. Say, for instance, through a Twitter account or a Facebook page. Most of the brands prefer to connect with customers directly through the usage of social media. This direct communication is authentic and can also be quite informative. Brands can learn a lot about how their products are impacting the users through the use of social media channels. The 'buzz' on the social circuit can be insightful for the brand.

Digital is not only easy to manage but also very empirical. Unlike the case of traditional media, in digital marketing, every action of the user is captured, dissected and analysed. From heatmaps that capture where your eyes hovered for longer, to clickthrough's that count on which links the user chose to click and which were ignored. Not only that, the data can be segmented based on geography, gender, operating system, time, etc. Digital marketing gives a quick and thorough insight into the mind of



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the customer or would-be customer. All the information gleaned from the interactions can be effectively used for the creation of new products and services by the brand.

And when it comes to cost, the ROI when is positive for digital marketing. In the traditional advertising cycle, one is not sure of the impact of the advertisement; hence it is almost impossible to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of a campaign. Meanwhile, it is all crystal clear when it comes to digital marketing. Therefore, brands can genuinely assess the effectiveness of their campaigns and decide accordingly.

Thus, the question arises, if indeed digital advertising is all that good, why hasn't it replaced traditional marketing altogether?

Well, there are some counterpoints to digital advertising. Unlike traditional marketing, digital has a fleeting-permanence to them. For instance, a jingle of the Titan watch will immediately connect with you, or you can recall quite a handful of television adverts that have touched you. On the other hand, there will hardly be a banner-advert that will be stored in your memory or win a Lion at Cannes. Considering that users are bombarded with so many messages these days, there are hardly any memorable messaging that will stay on. Secondly, digital ads are often deemed as intrusive and annoying. The ones that come before you are waiting

for your video to load on YouTube.

Digital advertising is also complicated. While it seems intuitive and straightforward, there's much learning required in the digital sphere, from search engine marketing to social media. Each channel usually requires its specialist.

Leveraging digital medium

Harish Bijoor is a Brand-thinker and practitioner, who runs a unique boutique consulting outfit branded "Harish Bijoor Consults Inc." He is known for his candid views when it comes to advertising and marketing. He seems sure about an inevitable digital wave in the marketing sphere. "The tussle between the traditional medium and digital advertising medium has been going on for some time.

But, the COVID-19 Pandemic has sort of titled the scales in favour of the digital medium. The epidemic has immensely hastened the shift that was slow and cautioned. In the past, digital advertising was limited due to the low amount of penetration. Now digital has become a sort of norm in every sphere, from education to e-commerce. And this spurt in digitization will drive the uptake of digital marketing."

One of the examples that Harish touts up to emphasize his argument of the digital shift is the one with e-commerce. He speaks about the manner in which traditional brick-mortar companies had to adapt to the digital marketplace to

stay relevant quickly. Considering that the audience was now shopping online, the brands had to ensure that they will be visible to the online shoppers, just to stay relevant. Brands that had gained market share based on user trust will need to invest in digital marketing to maintain the lead. "When it comes to brands, trust is indeed forever. Yet for the customer, the trust is now reposed with an intermediary like Amazon or Flipkart. Thus, brands need to be conscious of this shift and plan accordingly."

His advice to the mattress industry is simple; be innovative and be agile. "Digital marketing is no more an option. It is a necessary tool in any brand's quiver. Hence the comparison with traditional marketing is irrelevant. The only thing the mattress industry can do is to be agile and innovative." Indeed, in the end, there is no real schism between traditional and digital marketing. Ultimately both types of marketing have their benefits and downfalls, but the key is understanding your specific marketing needs, considering your budget and understanding your target audience.

Typically, the older generation and late adults are the ones that are targetted by traditional marketing channels. And while Gen Z and millennials are the mainstays of the digital medium, it is a surprisingly suitable route for all ages. The simple moral of the story: both digital and traditional marketing can work for you, as long as you know what your audience wants and what serves your brand the best. **CT**

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

The growing digital media consumption is paving the way for the mattress industry to the new avenue. The industry needs to adopt the new way, follow the trend and gain benefits. The online advertising or digital marketing is the new way of selling the products in the era.



Today's Customer is very well-researched

Prashant Jain, *Director Marketing, Libra Mattress*, talks about how the 'new normal' would redefine the lifecycle value of a customer. He tells us why mattress is not just a mattress anymore and why the industry should start selling real-life benefits instead of features

Q What changes has the Covid crisis brought in? Has it affected your company and its offerings in a big way?

We feel almost like a new company after this pandemic. We have learnt to communicate better and through other digital means. The industry has also realized the importance of the influence of a 'millennial' and the solid shift towards e-commerce. Today's customers are very well-researched. S/he already knows about concepts of our industry like memory foam etc.

They may do their transactions offline but they read and research a lot online. Even in non-urban areas comfort and the millennials are influencing buying decisions.

We have seen an immense growth due to product & strategy upgradation. We have also seen a shift in the average customer lifecycle value..

Q Will the concept of a 'bed' and a 'mattress' change in a major way as we move forward?

Definitely. For instance, Mattress isn't a mattress anymore, It has become a Dining Table, Sofa, study Table & Office Desk in these COVID times. Also as more and more family members stay at home, the dimensions of space will change.

The industry will open up for new

formats like bed-wardrobes or sofa-cum-bed too.

Q Are you exploring new segments and regions ahead?

Yes. We are expanding to 350 stores by 2021 (Libra Home Retail Plan wherein 45 stores are already working) of which 250 would be in North India. Our goal is to have a complete manufacturing presence pan-India by the end of March of the financial year.

Two years back, we started a foam-processing & Mattress unit in Ahmedabad. We are coming up with an additional exclusive Mattress production facility in UP & Maharashtra. E-Commerce is our new key focused area. Pathbreaking products, segments & strategies are on its way.

Q You have been strong in niche segments like Orthopaedics. Is that going to continue?

We have been pioneers here since 2002. We brought in the first set of offerings with unique strengths around certifications (like All India Association of Physiotherapists), Omega Foam etc. We will keep strengthening this part.

Q What's your hope and vision for the industry?

After the Covid crisis, a lot has changed in the industry. We have seen how organised players have redefined

themselves. We have also noticed that unorganised players were not able to cope up that quickly, and strongly. For the first time, there is a considerable attention for this industry on the aspects of international tie-ups and foreign investments flowing in.

India will also gain from the impact China has gone through during the last few months, thanks to our inherent strengths in textile industry. But we definitely need to be regulated like many international industries are.

We need to remove unscrupulous players from this space. As we step forth, we will see a lot of global interest and technology shifts. The healthcare segment would explode and flourish like never before even after the crisis is over.

Our focus should be on building the right innovation and on understanding our customers better. Let's sell real benefits and look at the real-world problems from a customer's perspective.

Also expand the lifecycle value and address a customer's real needs – beyond the mattress. I know that a bright future awaits us but as industry players and innovators, we need to do our part in accelerating it. **CT**

Mattress Recycling: What a Bed-Time Story!

The concept of recycling is not new. The mattress with huge amount of artificially made ingredients and chemicals once retired need to be recycled to avoid those potential threats to our mother earth.



How is a Mattress Recycled?

- **Repurposing:** By deconstructing (about 85-90%) the bed and finding ways to use old bedding. Deconstructing equipment can either be done in a semi-automated way or via manual means. It leads to cleaner, higher valued streams of recovered materials
- **Melting:** Springs & Coils and other metal that can be made into new items
- **Shredding:** Foam can be shredded and used as a fuel source, in carpet padding etc. Fibres like Cotton and other fibres can be used in filters, insulation or as fuel source. An apt process for wet and contaminated mattresses
- **Reclamation:** Fabrics & Upholstery can be used in other items
- **Chipping:** Wood can be chipped for mulch or used as fuel
- **Crushing:** Crunching the mattresses, and then sending the stuff into a series of chutes that sucks the detritus out (via vacuum or magnets) and segregates it into fibre and foam.
- **Manual or Automated pocket spring recycling machines:** That take the springs out of the pockets

When you see a mattress, you see, well, what else – a mattress. The answer to a long day, the respite from all the exhaustion, the cradle of sleep – that’s what a bed means to a customer. But a lot goes into making it that way. And, incidentally, a lot can happen into making it a cradle that planet Earth likes as well. It need not be a burden that is dumped onto the already-dropping shoulders of the environment. It need not be a liability to be sent to a crusher or thrown down an incinerator so that it is out of sight. It can be a Phoenix - another set of possibility that can rise



from the ashes.

But can it?

Mattress Recycling: The need and the potential

It’s hard to see what lies underneath, and around, a mattress when we are plopping into it at night. But if we look closely, an average mattress is a thick pyre of a lot of toxic chemicals, flame-retardant elements and what not. It has stuff like poly-brominated diphenyl ethers, formaldehyde, mercury, petroleum-based ingredients and a lot of other materials.

So when four million old mattresses are disposed of by a lot of houses on this planet, it is not just some beds that are being dumped in landfills, it is a lot of material that is full of toxins. It is still stuff that can be, and should be, used, reused and reshaped. Things like box springs, metal, wood and a lot of other so-called scrap that is still not exactly ‘waste’.

To add to that, the shrinking lifecycle and online-convenience of returns has also aggravated this problem of the environmental burden of even the most light-weight mattresses. The sleep economy is growing like never before and as more and more start-ups scramble to woo the customer sitting at home, the flip-side of the business is going to show in an ugly way in the

landfills and dump-yards for sure. Most of these companies offer 100-day returns – and some even stretch it to a 365-day return ease. Are the players willing to send the returned stuff to recyclers in a proper way? How much of that goes to rogue recyclers and makes way into the market again as re-wrapped mattresses?

With the advent of roll-down technology – where mattresses can be packed into small, easily shippable boxes – is not just the trigger of a \$30 billion global market – but also of a big invisible waste mountain. Let us not forget that mattress materials are often not biodegradable, and they can take up a lot of time and space sitting in the landfills. The large, heavy-duty frames have the danger of damaging expensive equipment. Also the toxic nature of materials used in an atypical mattress can leach out into the surrounding soil and groundwater.

The weight, bulkiness, low reuse potential, chemical composition and the low value of the material-recovery make mattresses a specially challenging product when seen from the lens of recycling. Recycling can help to deconstruct and segregate at least the steel, polyester wadding and foam. These can be directed for onward sale to material-specific reprocessors. Plus, with the use of automated shredders, better material segregation

RoR: Return on Recycling Research is underway for hygienically treating the foam from mattresses to allow it to be used in higher value applications, like new consumer items. The recovery rate of recyclable bed materials, at good recyclers, varies between 80 to 95 percent. The polyurethane foam recovered is mostly used to produce carpet underlay. Latex foam makes up 5-10 percent of the foam in mattresses and has no second-life applications other than energy recovery. Often textiles, foams and other recovered mattress fillings are put up for Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF). Wood is recycled as bio-fuel or other recycled wood products. Plastic and steel from the box-springs are recycled by respective industry players Cotton and felt are recycled into new felt and insulation.



can be achieved than what manual deconstruction currently allows. Some material can be used for the production of Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) and some processes can strengthen the resale value of the recovered materials and components.

That is why players and governments across the world are waking up to the possibility of recycling. Governments like UK, for instance, are working to ensure longer life-spans, the more reuse, and circular principles, Extended Producer Responsibility etc. If you are wondering if any of those intentions are turning into reality, there is a lot of light being seen at the end of the tunnel.

Tossing Over to Positive Action

As per a recent report, the wave of change is palpable and strong. We are witnessing a spurt of more sustainable business models for mattress recycling, with the industry diverting more 'End of Life' mattresses away from landfill than ever before. Not only that, a lot of research is also being injected into designing mattresses for easier

dismantling. Efforts are being taken at the onset of a product cycle to make more room for using recycled materials for component parts, while also working on the fag-end side – how to develop new components for mattresses made from recycled materials from other sources. The industry, as per some reports, has shown willingness to work with all facets - supply chain, the waste management sector, policy makers and legislators etc.

Frank from Joyce Foam also illustrates how the company is part of these initiatives at an industry level setting up a good network of recycling businesses and sustainable funding model for product stewardship. "It is still very much in its infancy but the revolution is on and growing."

The adoption path is not very bullish but very discouraging either. "Over the last few years we have seen a gradual increase and uptick in consumer consciousness (where their products come from, and where do they go after use) and the desire to be environmentally responsible amongst our customers. This 'planet first' mentality has also become more generally adopted by larger companies and cities alike. This is encouraging for us because municipalities are starting to realize that they must create a platform

for change and give their residences the option of choice when it comes to recycling." Peter Conway, the VP of Business Development, Spring Back Recycling tells the experience of this US-based non-profit mattress recycling company.

If we flip through the pages of the National Bed Federation End-of-Life Report 2019, we would notice that almost 50 percent of surveyed businesses have partnered with charities to re-use returned mattresses where appropriate. What do the others do? About 40 percent use mattress recyclers for disposal of most of their returned/collected mattresses. And 37 percent use waste contractors. But 50 percent of survey respondents were completely sure of what the end fates of the mattresses they dispose of were (as many as 80 percent of this set indicated that there was at least some recycling, while nine businesses reported some refurbishment or cleaning for resale of the mattresses that they collected or that were returned to them.

Don't Throw, Re-Use

A notable change is being seen in areas like reuse and refurbishment of mattresses as well as a surge in unmet demand for good quality, second-hand mattresses. In fact, the report revealed that a lot of businesses reported a rise in



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- Oeko-tex® compliant
- Applicable on different fabric types
- Inherent biodegradable and recyclable
- Extensive test results on different types of viruses and bacteria

* treated articles with public health claims need EPA registration



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devan

The concept of recycling is not new. The mattress with huge amount of artificially made ingredients and chemicals once retired need to be recycled to avoid those potential threats to our mother earth

the number of used mattresses – these were either returned to them due to faults or within comfort-guarantee periods or collected as a service alongside the delivery of a new mattress. They also expect to be handling even more used mattresses by 2020. Not just that, on the front of retailers too, there is a jump in the feeling of obligation to provide used-mattress collection as a service offering to meet customer expectations. There has been a net increase in the number of operators since 2016 in the mattress recycling sector. The report also shows how recyclers are showing more investment in machinery, site-expansions and transportation, thanks to more demand for mattress recycling from the commercial and services sectors.

An uptick in interest for Register of Approved Mattress Recyclers (RAMR) has also been noted – this is being developed by the National Bed Federation and the Textile Recycling Association. What is, perhaps, more heartening to note is the improvement seen in professionalism and transparency in the mattress recycling sector. This means a lot, the sector's reputation from the actual or perceived use of recovered components in undeclared mattress refurbishment or manufacture.

Thankfully, action is being observed across all parts of the ecosystem like - Municipal waste management and recycling programs, Institutional sector, Charity programs, Households,

Hotels and other hospitality industry generators of old mattresses, and, of course, Mattress manufacturers and retailers.

But a lot remains to be dusted away even now.

Bed-Bugs That Still Pop Up: Challenges and Barriers

The size or weight is not the only part that ruins the recycling prospects of any mattress. There are a lot of deterrents that envelope a used mattress. For example, who wants to deal with the 'hauling' of the used mattress – the customer or the recycler? Charging feeds for collection of mattresses is a big problem that stops many customers from sending a used mattress to the appropriate recycler. Provided, one is easily available in their geographical proximity.

Peter Conway, the VP of Business Development, Spring Back Recycling highlights how much this area can help to accelerate recycling. He shares that many Colorado cities like Thorton, Denver, Arvada, and more are starting to do more City Clean-Up Days with a focus on recycling large bulky items like mattresses. "People have also started to gravitate more towards the pickup-on-demand model where all they have to do is leave their mattress pieces outside of their home and schedule a pickup through us where we will come and collect it. This offers a level of convenience for the consumer and

On-Track?

The absolute level of used mattress returns and collection reported, was 14 percent higher in 2018, than in 2016. This growth was attributed wholly due to retailers, where the level of used mattress returns and collection grew from 10 percent to 13 percent of sales. Some 50 percent respondents expect an increase in the number of used returned/collected mattresses they'll handle by the end of 2020 (Source: NBF Report 2019)

What's it Like Being a Recycler

We recycle over 7,000 mattresses per month and divert millions of pounds of waste materials from local landfills each year. We help the mattress sellers by offering them convenient and affordable options to recycle old or used inventory. We offer the customers an affordably-priced alternative to landfills with the added convenience of home pickups or locational drop offs, and we work to support our downstream recycling partners by providing them with high volumes of recycled textiles that they can process and turn into things like carpet pads and scrap metals. All of this creates a closed loop recycling ecosystem that is sustainable and efficient. While we weren't the first people to recycle mattresses, we are certainly on the leading edge of helping to create solutions to a global problem.

As shared by Spring Back Recycling

also helps adhere to COVID-19 social distancing guidelines."

A lot of barriers still remain even if we assume that customers are willing to take that extra step for recycling and manufacturers or sellers will support this intention in every way possible. First barrier is – Cost (of collection, of equipment, of channelizing the post-recycling ecosystem and of damaged machinery). The worth of materials recovered in the secondary market is also uncertain and versatile. Springs and metal may have some value but foam or fibre may not have that much worth in terms of money.

"Australia does have a number of challenges – like reverse logistics and geographical peculiarities of the region that make collection aspects a little difficult. Deconstruction and recovery vary as per different types of foams. Monetisation adds to the challenge here. But we keep addressing them

Sunny Ambitions

1. The Mattress Recycling Council (MRC) has also been sharing encouraging numbers over a period of time – if it recycles more than 1.5 million mattresses every year, then there is a lot of hope for the recycling space for sure. Its goal - By 2024, to get 60 percent of waste diverted away from landfills. The MRC also runs the Bye Bye Mattress program, which subsequently stepped up to help keep mattresses out of landfills.
2. The National Bed Federation has set a code of practice and accreditation system for genuine mattress recyclers. It aims to divert 75 percent of new mattresses sold from landfill by 2028. It is encouraging manufacturers to consider eco-friendly designs. Emphasis is high on promotion of reusable mattresses that would be leased to consumers for a period of time, before being sent back, stripped and refreshed.

and keep evolving.” Explains Frank from Joyce Foam.

It is hard to ignore the aspect of awareness when we talk of challenges. As Peter Conway, the VP of Business Development, Spring Back Recycling lets on that one of the biggest challenges that his team has faced, and continues to face to this day, is around education, awareness, and implementation. “Many people that we speak with didn’t even know that mattress recycling was a thing. They just assume, like everyone else, that you take old mattresses to the dump and throw them away. End of story. Once they become aware that there is a better way to responsibly recycle them (and how easy we make it for the consumer), they take interest and spread the word. In addition to public education, there is also the city and state side of things that can be challenging. We work with a wide



Many people are not even aware of the mattress recycling. This careless actions of people lead to land fills with less utilization of reusable resources and cause harm to the environment

assortment of agencies and while many of them instantly see the value in what we do, others are more skeptical and hard to convince.”

The biggest group that his organization is trying to partner with is the local landfills. This is the largest collection point of mattresses and box springs and they don’t want them in their dumps. Because they have a limited space, and because of how much room mattresses take up, all landfills should be doing everything they can to convince people to not dump their mattresses and instead recycle them. “The best way for them to do this is raise their prices relating to mattresses and box springs. Again, this has been hard for us to convince them to do but some are starting to come around.”

Then there are mattresses that are returned in the comfort-guarantee period. Most manufacturers deconstruct returned mattresses to understand the fault so that the reason of return can be ascertained. That’s when difficulties arise related to disposing of the materials recovered. Most focus time and money on improving training and internal quality checks so that they can reduce manufacturing faults. As to retailers, there is the issue of storage space, for consolidating used mattresses. Some also worry about the risk to their brands and reputation due to lack of transparency and regulation in the mattress recycling sector. NBF estimates have indicated that it would take another 50 years to reach a 100 percent mattress recycling rate.

But the biggest and the most unexpected problem is that of fraudsters that dupe the system by posing as reputable mattress recyclers. With official-looking websites, teams and services, they collect the mattresses, pick the ones in good condition, replace the outer casing, put them in new covers with branded logos and sell the second-hand mattresses as new ones. These unsanitised, unsafe, and used products enter the market again causing damage to not just the gullible customer but also the brand-reputation of the company the logo of which has been used here.



There are many industry players, universities who are working towards organize the reuse of mattresses. There is a need to expand this recycle industry geographically so that logistics of used mattress can become more easy and recycle can work efficiently

Conclusion: *Will The Phoenix Rise?*

With all these possibilities and challenges, the space of mattress recycling looks as messy as the landfills look now. But then there is good mess and then there is bad mess. The space is expanding and deepening with the influx of many other stripes of players. There are charities, niche sellers of refurbished mattresses, furniture banks, homeless shelters and DIY recyclers that are accelerating the good cause of mattress recycling by giving it a full curve.

Apart from industry players like Saatva, ZenHaven, Loom&Leaf, Happsy, Spindle, and Casper that are working on various spectrums of this space, there are many other organizations that are filling various blanks in this space. National Bed Federation End-of-Life Report 2019 also noted an increased importance and complexity of the logistics involved, with emergence of specialist logistic companies, such as DHL (with its Enviro Solutions offering), Rhenus Home Delivery Ltd, Hermes and UPS, that are helping with reverse logistics offerings in mattress recycling. We need more innovation in these areas as well in the space of used mattress logistics to bolster more growth in mattress recycling. Expanding geographical concentration of mattress recyclers is also an important area to

focus on.

Plus, some bed-in-the-box manufacturers like Simba, Eve, Otty and Dreams Beds are selling refurbished (or rejuvenated) or end-of-line products on Ebay. British Heart Foundation gets donations from retailers of mattresses returned due to minor-faults or within their comfort-guarantee periods (National Bed Federation End-of-Life Report 2019). There are organisations like Better Re-use that are working with universities and other businesses to organise the reuse of large volumes of furniture, including mattresses, generated during refurbishments. Online trading platforms such as Globechain, who are named as a recycling partner by a London hotel chain, have apparently facilitated the reuse, of over 2,000 mattresses.


The Contour Changes

As for looking ahead, there are no signs of slowing down, if you ask Peter Conway, the VP of Business Development, Spring Back Recycling. "We expect our business to continue to grow and develop at a steady pace. Space is a limited quantity and mattresses and box springs take up a lot of it. As such, people will continue to need to get rid of them and most want to do it in a way that is responsible and environmentally-friendly. There are plenty of junk haulers in the state

and around the country but there are actually only a handful of mattress recyclers like us that process and recycle 95 percent of all mattresses. I truly believe that this trend of eco-minded folks wanting to do right is only going to keep growing proportionally with issues regarding climate change and global awareness."

For a mattress player, there is definitely a lot of scope for adding value to this landscape - by working on green-friendly designs, by extending a mattress's lifecycle value, by providing easy collection and disposal avenues and by partnering with the right players in the recycling value chain. Certifications, testing and regulations can also add a lot of efficiency in the system by wiping away illegal players, fraud recyclers and rogue dealers.

As a customer, you can help a lot too. By hauling the mattress to the right point or breaking down the mattress to a certain level (As some recycling plants may not accept complete mattresses, but they may very well accept the broken-down components), or by repurposing the mattress (as cushions, pillows or home renovation designs).

We have long heard of the adage – Ashes to Ashes. Dust to Dust. How about recycling it? 

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ISPF role in mattress recycling

As the world advances industrially it's inevitable that the product cycle becomes vicious and naturally the need arises for the disposal of used products that obey with process waste. However, the need for Circular Economy becomes very essential to keep up sustainability and to protect the environment from getting polluted. This boils down to the basic design of any product as under:

- Keep products and materials in use.
- Re-generate natural systems.
- Design out waste and pollution.

Hence, starting from the source, we need to design such a system which is capable of Recycling or Refining, Refurbishing and Reusing the original product as efficiently as possible. If we look at the world, we see the EV (Efficiency Value) targets for a Circular Economy (CE) as 65 percent recycling of municipal waste by 2035 and 70 percent of package waste by 2030.

Below are the recycling targets for specific packaging materials.

Paper & cardboard	85 percent
Ferrous materials	80 percent
Aluminium	60 percent
Glass	75 percent
Plastic	65 percent
Wood	30 percent

The benefits of CE are immense, in both economic & non-financial targets:

- Substantial net material saving.
- Mitigation of price volatility and supply risk.
- Opportunity for Innovation.
- Provides new job potential.

Keeping these compulsions in mind, and behaving with a conscientiousness which comes from being close to the customer, the Mattress INDUSTRY reaffirmed its CE journey recently. To put things in perspective, India has been manufacturers of Modern Mattresses since the last 5 decades.

Now the current year is racing to produce about 20 million mattresses by 2021-22. However, in the subject of CE, India is yet to make a start. Some initial steps have been taken to bring this project to light.

The initial kick start was made in the year 2018 by ISPF during Mattress Expo with a brief introduction of Soft Landing – the Product Stewardship Scheme of Australia – of mattress given by Covestro. Subsequently this idea was further developed with the webinar inviting speakers from the Soft Landing Company and Covestro from Australia with participants from various sections of the Indian mattress industry. The stakeholders showed interest and enthusiasm in taking this project forward.

IPUA and ISPF have taken keen interest in this project and with the team effort from Covestro, Yunus Social Business and Karo Sambhav, the first seed was sown to conduct a one-day workshop in Mumbai. This workshop was sponsored by IPUA, ISPF and Sheela Foam Ltd and discussed various aspects of mattress circular journey. Keeping the Australian example as a role model, the day's highlights included a cross-industry learning as well as group design thinking exercise. It was explained that for a population of 24 million, 440 million USD worth mattress were produced and 110 million USD worth were recycled. Whereas the consumption in India was far less, the rate of growth would land us in severe sustainability issues in a few years. Hence there is an urgent need to focus on this project. The participation was enthusiastic with all stakeholders making their presence felt, including IKEA.

Workshop Analysis: During the workshop Mr. Pranshu of 'Karo Sambhav' explained various operating practices in adjacent sections of plastics in e-waste. Mr. Rahul Batra of YSB gave a case study on tires. Covestro reiterated the Soft Landing learnings while IKEA spoke on their global experience and India intentions,

giving impressive examples.


Participating members from IPUA, ISPF and IKEA then put their heads together to work out a plan for implementation of Circular Journey of Mattresses and present the same as part of the workshop output.

Way Forward: At the conclusion of the workshop held at Mumbai in Feb 2020, it was decided to form a Steering Committee consisting of 3 members each from ISPF and IPUA, with the Secretary of ISPF as the coordinator. Accordingly, a Committee was formed and the following road map has been formulated:-

Set - up of a Joint Working Group with three members each from IPUA & ISPF. They will steer three major activities:

- **Value Chain Analysis:**
 - Material Movement;
 - Behavior,
 - Ecosystem,
 - Standards
 - Informal sector engagement / new micro enterprises
- **Development of a business model:**
 - Geographies
 - Delta funding
- **Pilot Plant Operation:**
 - Collection
 - Reverse Logistics
 - Recycling
 - Information

It is expected that the Steering committee will go ahead with the Road map and take steps to set up the Pilot Plant very soon.

At a time when the Government of India is yet to formalize the Extended Producer Responsibility implementation, for which the existing Waste Management Rules 2016 is a forerunner, it is heartening to see the mattress industry coming together and working proactively to set its own goals and position itself to co-create the EPR when it arrives! 

The secret to healthy living: GOOD SLEEP

Sleep plays an important role in our lives, from keeping us alert to increase immunity, to so many else. Yet, lately, people are not sleeping all that well because of stress and addiction to electronic devices. With the COVID pandemic still impacting people, the importance of sleep could not be exaggerated in our lives.



As the mighty army of Alexander the Great was rampaging through the Persian Empire in the pursuit of Darius II, a certain Androstenes of Thasos was carrying out a curious experiment. Androstenes had captained a ship, and when on land he indulged in scientific experiments. One of the curious things he described were the daily leaf movements of the tamarind tree, *Tamarindus indicus* that were observed on the island of Tylos (now Bahrain).

He was intrigued as to how the leaves of the tree seemed to know when it was going to be a day, or when the lights would go out. It was as if there was an internal clock within the tree itself that tracked the passage of time, when to wake up for photosynthesis and when to pack up for sleep. It would be some 2000 years and more later that the observations of Androstenes would be validated. Dubbed as the circadian rhythms, these are the internalized clock-work in our bodies that seems to function in 24-hour cycles, running in the background silently. One of the most obvious manifestations of these circadian rhythms is the sleep-wake cycle, namely, how we feel sleepy during certain times of the day, and how we feel agile in others.

According to researchers, sleep is regulated by a homeostatic and a circadian process. These two processes, in combination, determine most aspects of sleep and related variables like sleepiness and alertness. After waking for several continuous hours, the sleep/wake homeostasis sends a signal that it is now time to sleep and rest. Meanwhile, the internal circadian clocks go through the day, regulating periods of freshness and sleepiness. These rhythms dip and rise at different times of the day, in adults' the strongest urge for sleep usually occurs between 2:00-4:00 am and in the afternoon between 1:00-3:00 pm, with some individual variations. The exciting part is, if we have slept well, the circadian dips will not be strong, and pretty intense if the sleep has been insufficient.

The reason our body has an internal



The sleep is regulated by a homeostatic and a circadian process. Our body has an internal mechanism to remind us to sleep on time is because of the sheer importance of sleep. Sleep is a critical function for humans, that refreshes and rejuvenates our body and soul.

mechanism to remind us to sleep on time is because of the sheer importance of sleep in our daily lives just cannot be overstated.

Importance of Sleep

Sleep is a critical function necessary for living. In humans, sleep is like a refreshing pill that rejuvenates our body and soul. Sleep is essential to ensure regular functioning of the body, as it plays an important part in keeping us healthy. Almost all our bodily functions are either directly or indirectly dependent on sleep. It is during this resting cycle that your brain is hard at work looking over a whole list of biological upkeep

and preparing for the coming day.

Thus, a sufficient amount of sleep is a pre-requisite for a healthy life. Adequate sleep is also tied to improved athletic performance, including more incredible speed, agility and reflexes.

The counter-effects of sleep deprivation are a clear indication of how important sufficient sleep is. According to various researchers, people with chronic sleep deprivation are a much greater risk for:

- Obesity or a break in bodily functions
- Psychiatric conditions such as depression
- Automobile accidents due to drowsy driving
- Occupational injury due to excessive sleepiness and decreased alertness
- Low productivity at the office
- Not ideal relations with friends and family

In short, sleep plays a very critical role in our life, in terms of keeping us healthy and robust, and that brings us to another pertinent question. How much sleep is sufficient sleep? Here's a list of hours as suggested by experts:

- Newborns (16-18 hours)
- Preschool-aged children (11-12 hours)
- School-aged children (At least 10 hours)
- Teens (9-10 hours)
- Adults (7-9 hours)

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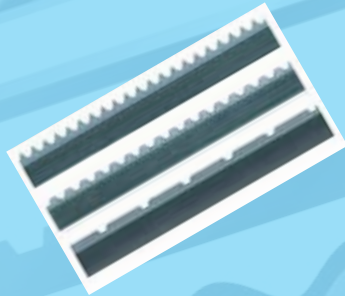
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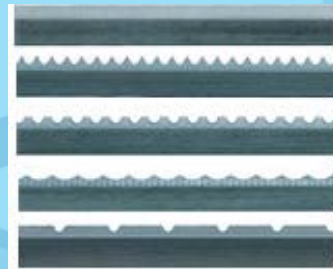


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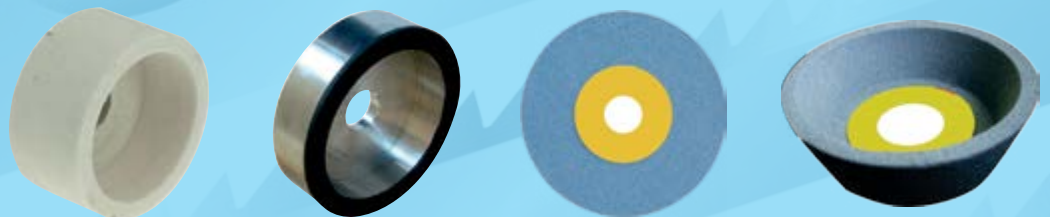


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Adequate sleep is necessary for the following reasons

Alertness: Sufficient sleep replenishes your body and allows your mind to regain focus to tackle daily challenges. Adequate sleep is also an important stimulant for creativity.

Repair & Restoration: Sleep is the time when the body repairs the damage caused by stress, ultraviolet rays and other harmful exposure. This is also the time when muscle injuries and other such issues are resolved.

Memory Charging: It is a known fact that sleeping is the critical time when the neurons are working at storing information. This is the time when memories are shaped and stored in context to others. Sleep-deprived people display a loss of mental acuity.

Boosting Immunity: Good sleep is an immunity booster that aids in warding off infection. This best explained by how, we tend to feel sleepy when sick, as this is the body's way of taking care of the illness.

Now a days people are more addicted to electronic gadgets and forgotten the importance of sleep, that repairs and restores the damages caused by stress, relaxes the muscles, recharges the neurons, and increases the immunity

- Elderly (8-11 hours)

But honestly, sleep requirements vary from one individual to another. How much sleep is sufficient for you is dependent on age and level of fitness. It is important to note that merely number of hours is not the only factor, but rather the amount of "deep sleep" is considered more critical.

The COVID Connection

The COVID Pandemic has truly changed our work in a manner that was unimaginable just a few months back. With the lockdowns and quarantines in place, millions of people have taken to

the new ethos of working from home or popularly dubbed as WFH. While, on the face of it, WFH sounds very good, there are lot many implications associated with it, especially relating to health. With work becoming a part of the home life-style, the lines between work and life have dissipated completely.

People are not only putting up a lot more hours, but they are also stressed out because of the overall conditions related to the epidemic. This combination of increased workload and health/financial concerns has resulted in people sleeping a lot lesser and not in an optimum manner. Sometime back, there was a survey done by Wakefit.co, Bengaluru-based sleep solutions startup, found that 67 percent of people in India with more people now sleeping after 11 pm than before the start of the lockdown period. In fact, over 81 percent of the respondents believe their sleep schedule will be better once the epidemic ends, according to the study, which involved 1,500 people. While 46 percent of the respondents used to sleep before 11 pm before the lockdown, now only 39 percent go to bed before 11 pm.

Similarly, about 25 percent of the respondents used to go to bedpost midnight during normal circumstances, post the lockdown, 35 percent have started going to bed after 12. This indicates a 40 percent rise in late-night sleepers since the lockdown.

These irregular sleeping patterns are bound to take a toll on the people—especially the immunity. Poor sleep leads to a drop in the production of molecules that counter inflammation, thus leading to increased inflammation over some time. Researchers have found that sleep deprivation reduces the production of T-cells in the body. These cells continuously circulate in the bloodstream looking for pathogens.

Adhesion to other cells enables them to migrate to different areas in the body and, for example, dock onto infected cells in order to kill them subsequently. Being sleep deprived also makes you vulnerable to viruses and bacteria, which might make you more prone to catching a cold or flu. While there has not been a specific correlation between COVID-19 and sleep deprivation, a weakened immune system is not the best way to fend off against this highly infective virus.

Hence, doctors and researchers across the globe are emphasizing on the recuperative aspects of sleep. Numerous studies, sleep is perhaps the single best measure to deal with, or prevent, colds. According to one study conducted by researchers from the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), it was found that poor sleep was the number one factor in determining whether someone would get sick after being exposed to the cold virus. The UCSF study had 164 participants

track their sleep habits for a week. Afterwards, they were all put in a hotel and given nasal drops, exposing them to the cold.

Volunteers who had reported good sleep during the week — averaging at least 7 hours of sleep each night — were much less likely to get sick. On the other hand, participants who got 6 hours of sleep or less each night were 4.2 more likely to catch a cold. Thus, according to the conclusions drawn by the studies, poor sleep was the primary determinant of whether someone got sick, overriding their age, race, income, stress level and habits like smoking.

The Electronic Part

Another significant factor that is

Irregular sleeping habits takes toll on health, specially on immunity. The weakened immunity system will not be able to fight the disease causing bacterias and viruses and the body becomes vulnarable for many diseases

impacting sleeping patterns these days is the sheer spread of electronic devices. Thanks to the ubiquitous mobile phones, people are all the time clued on to their devices, watching videos or engaging in conversations. When the mobile is not on, it will be the television set. And when it isn't the TV, it will be the computers. Coming back to our circadian rhythms, it has been observed that using TVs, tablets, smartphones, laptops, or other electronic devices before sleep, derails the internal clock, suppresses the release of the sleep-inducing hormone melatonin, thereby delaying the onset of sleep.

The primary culprit for the sleep disruption is the blue light emitted by electronic screens. The short-wavelength of the artificial blue light can reprogram the brain to delay the onset of sleep. The more electronic devices that a person uses in the evening, the harder it is to fall asleep or stay asleep. Besides increasing alertness, during the sleeping hours, these devices delay the onset of REM sleep or deep sleep, reduces the total amount of REM sleep, and compromises attention the next morning. Over time, these effects can add up to a significant, chronic deficiency in sleep.

The scenario is even more critical when it comes to kids. These days, children are much more exposed to electronic devices than they said a decade or two ago. A vast majority of



Studies say that the blue light produced from electronic gadget screens can delay the sleep leading to various sleep disorders

children in the secondary standard tend to get their phones, and this increases the screen time. In fact, with much of the education being conducted virtually, children are wholly clued on to the electronic devices. Sadly, this particular issue is not specific to a place or a culture but is now a global issue. According to insights gleaned from research studies, from North America to Europe to East Asia, studies reveal that anywhere from 68-95 percent of children — even toddlers under the age of 3 — use electronic screens daily. For example, in a survey of more than two thousand Italian youngsters, researchers found that 40 percent of children between the age of 1 and 3 use some sort of electronic screen within 30 minutes of bedtime. For kids under the age of 14, the number was 65 percent.

With the spread of Internet, electricity and mobility, such shocking numbers are pervasive across the globe. There is hardly any corner of the world that is devoid from the influence of the electronic devices. The same is true for kids and adults. The only solution to this issue is to enforce a digital curfew that is adhered by the entire family. There should be a specific time in the evening, when all the electronic devices must be switched off. The ideal manner is to have this curfew hour, some two hours before bedtime. One exciting manner in which this curfew could be achieved is by reverting to the good old days of reading a book. Reading under the soft light of the lamp can be an excellent manner in which to connect to the family and also engage them in the right way.

The Solution

Now that we know about the importance of sleep and the role that it plays in

Here's a list of things that need to be done and not-done to ensure sound sleep in the night.

- Discipline is the key. Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day. Even if you have trouble falling asleep the night before, try to wake up at the same time. This helps maintain your body's natural sleep cycle.
- Reserve your bedroom for sleep, rest and nothing else.
- Exercise regularly. Exercise in moderate amounts tires the muscles and helps to sleep.
- Create a relaxing sleep environment. Prepare your bedroom to provide maximum comfort and minimal distraction. The best way to do so is to invest in a good mattress that not only supports the body in bed but also helps in rejuvenation/
- Determine your optimal amount of sleep. Try to sleep for that many hours and not more or less.
- Keep a notepad by your bed to jot down the issues causing your stress as you try to go to sleep.
- Breathe deeply and stretch your body. Consider an easy nightly stretching routine that includes deep breathing as a way to relax and prepare for a good night's sleep. A little Yoga stretching will not be all that harmful.
- Keep naps short and sweet. Try to sleep enough at night that you don't need naps during the day.
- Turn off the bright lights of computers and phones within 2-3 hours of going to bed. If you can, try to structure your work so that you're spending your time at night reading books or articles on paper late at night rather than work on your computer.
- A soothing melody (without lyrics) can also be a helpful aid in sleeping.
- Wear light and loose-fitting clothes.
- And while the above were recommendations to follow, the following are a set of things to avoid:
 - Avoid naps during the evening.
 - Don't drink caffeine-containing beverages (coffee, tea, soft drinks) after dinner.
 - Don't eat heavy or spicy food in the evening.
 - Don't eat late evening meals or drink large quantities of liquids in the evening.
 - Don't watch TV, eat, or read in bed.
 - Don't lie awake in bed for long periods or watch the clock. If you can't fall asleep within 15 minutes, get out of bed. Write down your thoughts or do something relaxing before trying to fall back asleep again.
 - Don't compete. Everyone has different sleep needs, so encourage your friends to get what they need rather than bragging about how late you can stay awake.
 - Don't be distracted and try to focus on sleep.

keeping us healthy and fit, it is now time to look at the do's and the don'ts for a healthy sleeping pattern. This is all the more important, because of the growing strength of the COVID pandemic.

One of the important ways in which people can sleep better is to focus on the sleeping mattress. It has been proved by numerous researchers that sleeping on a comfortable bed can make all the difference between a night of

good sleep and a bad one. With most of the people still confined to their homes, an investment in a good mattress can go a long way in ensuring optimum sleep.

In the end, the following nature is the best way to live in harmony in this world. Our internal clock, the circadian rhythms, is the best guide when it comes to sleeping. Don't disturb these rhythms, and it will result in a much better, peaceful and happier existence. **CT**



It's fun to unbox! And romance customers

Mathew Chandy, *Managing Director, Duroflex*, tells us why and how the pandemic was a good cue to break the box and embrace new areas like WFH furniture, cots, more EBOs than MBOs and CoCo experiences centres. He also tells how the company's shifting forward with the influence of new segments and investment partners. And he never forgets to remind that – Great sleep is a superpower!

Q What new innovations and plans are you excited about as we move into the next year? Any highlights from the Covid phase and its impact that made you re-invent your business strategy in a major way? Specially the Direct2Customer campaign and lock-down phase's retail expansion? What impact, if any, would the pause-button on the previously-slated manufacturing capacity expansion bring in?

I'm happy that we had a brief respite during lockdown to think about the things that really matter to customers – health, safety & comfort in your home. And VALUE. We listened carefully to consumers needs and focussed on product innovation. We also focussed on product and channel diversification.

We quickly brought out Duro-Safe, India's first anti-viral mattress protector (99.99 per cent effective against COVID). We have also launched beautifully-designed WFH furniture and cots to supplement our retail offering. We are engaging more on more via digital and e-commerce mediums as customers are doing a lot of online research and minimising time spent in shops. We also developed fully-sanitised and beautiful experience centres in major metros.

We also tried our level best to look after our employees – we protected jobs, we paid salaries, we invested in insurance for employees and their families. Most importantly, we tried to keep them and ourselves positive and excited about the post-Covid world. I feel happy about this in particular.

Q Tell us something about your focus on the new-gen market-how do you design and execute offerings like Sleepyhead, mattress-in-a-box etc.?

We set up a new company with a new team and brand-new thinking. We gave them freedom, ownership and responsibility. And the rest just fell into place - as a result. The mattress-in-a-box model is great – it is supply chain-efficient, it is cost-efficient, it is easy-peasy for the customer and it's fun to unbox!

A lot of new-generation companies have started entering and disrupting the industry. How much does that change the industry's thought process and evolution?

Yes, they keep all of us awake at night!!! But I am happy that they are doing this. They have brought innovation, and freshness to our industry. These nimble

disruptors have done well, but I think they have also paved the way for the industry to grow in a more organised manner.

Q You have recently scaled your retail footprint in a major way - what spurred this expansion and how is your MBO strategy panning out?

Having invested heavily into R&D and product development, we realised that customers need a better experience when shopping. This was not possible from our MBOs, so we converted a large number of our MBOs into EBOs. These gave customers a much better touch-and-feel experience and helped to showcase all of our new and innovative features and benefits. Last year we went one step ahead and opened ten company-owned and company operated (CoCo) experience centres in Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Chennai. These are plush experience centres, designed to really educate and romance our customers. Here, we also evangelise the importance of sleep and a good mattress.

MBOs will always remain relevant in a country like India where distribution needs to be deep and wide. But our brand is mainly built in EBOs, Experience

Centres and on digital.

Q What is the sleep accessories market like - any distinct behaviour or approach that it can be defined with when compared to the mattress market?

Great sleep accessories can greatly enhance the sleeping environment. In the past, our industry gave away cheap sleep accessories as a freebie with the mattress purchase. Now we must talk about the importance of health and hygiene and how mattress protectors, cervical pillows, aromatic pillows and plush linen can all greatly enhance the sleeping experience. They are not accessories, they give delight.

Q Can you share something more about your health plank - on anti-viral, ortho products and the much-exciting 'got your back' campaign?

We are privileged to be designing & marketing products that can greatly enhance the health and well-being of our customers. More than a lifestyle product, we are selling healthcare products. We can greatly enhance the spine health, ergonomic comfort and sleep hygiene of our customers.

Great sleep is a superpower, the third pillar of great health. All aspects of health - mind, body and soul - are greatly enhanced by great sleep. Without great sleep, it is very hard to maintain a good diet or sustain an exercise regime.

Q Is it easy to work on 'benefits' instead of the 'construction' messaging in your marketing strategy? What made you take this unique path - away from the industry?

Who really cares if you are sleeping on coir or springs or foam? Only we manufacturers seemed to think this was important. A coir manufacturer always talked coir, the foam guys always talked about foam, and the spring guys always promoted spring.

Thankfully we were able to get past our own manufacturing biases and think about customer needs and benefits. A customer cares about the

benefits that she will get, much more than features or materials. It wasn't easy because our channel is so used to selling based on materials. It was a bold, but very rewarding, decision we made four years ago. I must call out my colleagues Mathew Joseph and Arha for championing this decision. #Energise #Duropedic and #NaturalLiving are now commonly requested by our customers.

Q What are the upsides and challenges of offering hybrid mattresses?

Today all mattresses are hybrid mattresses.

Q You are present in multiple but distinct segments - How has Sleepyhead affected your product strategy and growth? What are the plans when we look at other segments like Retail, B2B etc.?

All channels - B2B, B2C, D2C, E-commerce offer tremendous opportunities for growth. I see a future that is phygital, where physical and digital lines are blurred. The organised market in India is just \$500mn, while the US market is \$30bn, with just 1/3rd of our population. We have miles to go before we get all Indians to sleep on a decent mattress.....

Q How much does your R&D strength contribute to your business?

One of our strongest leaders, Mathew George (a promoter) heads our R&D. Much of our recent momentum has been powered by innovative and agile product development.

Q What exactly can we see happening as you move towards the 2000 cr mark in the next five years? Can you also tell us something about the recent funding that the company garnered? How does that affect your future direction and goals?

This week we completed our investment into a new factory in Indore. This is a world-class manufacturing & supply point for the West and North of India. So yes, we can now be a truly national brand. Two years ago we established a strong team in the West, led by my

colleague Jacob George. The West is a highly unorganised market, but I am happy that this investment is starting to pay dividends now.

Because of our world-class manufacturing standards, we are an exporter and an official partner of IKEA, other major international brands, and quality furniture manufacturers like Stanley sofas.


We have a strong professional team - Mohan, Mathew, Pradeep, Smita and Ritu are all professionals who could be leading top MNCs. We are happy that we have three strong women leaders, including one on our board. We will continue to invest in great talent, and also into R&D and digital technologies.

I also hope that we do a bit more for our environment, we have joined forces with our competitors (and also IKEA) to chalk out a road map for a sustainable industry practices. One day I hope we can go beyond just being sustainable, and become re-generative. We have a lot of work to do here. We raised capital from Lighthouse to fund our expansion plans and our other investments. They have been a very knowledgeable, supportive and empathetic investor. While it sometimes feels like our fast and furious decision-making has slowed down, in reality our governance has improved and our decisions are better planned and thought-out. They have helped us avoid a few costly mistakes!

Q What next - from 1963 to now and ahead? What strengths have brought you this far and what new ones do you aim to add next for these goals?

We live and die by our DuroflexDNA - Integrity, Innovation and Fairness (IIF). I'd like to add "Customer Obsession" to this in the future.

Q Can you give your observations and suggestions on Comfort Times magazine? Your feedback will be very valuable for us.

The magazine is very relevant and accurate. Doing a great job! 



Using Big Data for Better Decision-making

Strangely, the term big data is a misnomer of sorts. Typically, when we speak of big data, it is perceived as a volume thing. Big data would seem to imply vast amounts of data, which is just one aspect of it. In reality, big data actually is an amalgamation of various processes that are connected with data collection, storage and processing of a significant amount of data. Thus, big data implies the process that converts data into actionable information.

Yet, data collection and data processing is not a novelty. Even as far back as the 19th Century, companies collected data and stored for as long as one can remember. Generally, a whole department used to craft and collect data, much of which was manual. Dubbed as the paper trail, every bit of information that was deemed necessary

was copied, and filed physically. Massive warehouses of archived data were created to store this ever-increasing data.

But all that changed with the advent of computers. Information storage was systematic and structured. Software programs emerged that could handle data that flowed across the organization, be it MIS reports or payroll data. Steadily, the information that flowed within the organization was digitized. This transformation enabled companies to be more productive and achieve better sales. For instance, once the supply-chain and logistics were digitized, companies could then seamlessly manage their inventory and production.

The advent of the Internet or Online was the most significant disruption

in the digital transformation journey. Suddenly, systems and processes went online. The data trickle turned into a data deluge, as systems across the corporate footprint were generating mind-boggling sums of data, and it was being processed at the centralized data centers. The explosion of data can be gauged by the fact that the total amount of data in the world was 4.4 zettabytes in 2013. That is set to touch 40 zettabytes by the end of 2020. Just for the sake of perspective, 40 zettabytes is equivalent to 40 trillion gigabytes.

As sensor-based Internet-enabled devices increase the data generation like never before. Dubbed as the 'Internet of Things' (IoT), millions of TVs, thermostats, wearables and even refrigerators are now generating petabytes of data every day. All this data is being added to an immense deluge.



And now companies are moving into another sphere, wherein data is automatically collected, through interconnected machines that talk to each other and even processed in auto-mode. Through the interplay of technologies like Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, a whole new realm of possibilities emerged. Data analytics becomes more mainstream.

"We have come a long way, from the times when data was stored physically in files or magnetic tapes. Today, systems interact with each other without any human interference. With the emergence of technologies like AI and ML, companies are exploring a wide spectrum of new functionalities. We are in an exciting phase when it comes to big data and analytics. Companies are slowly waking up to the real benefits that accrue with big data. Different functions of the companies can benefit in varying degrees. That's why its potential is seemingly unlimited," says Dr. Raj Palanna, CEO, eMpulse Global.

With the increased role of data and information within an organization, big data is gaining increased prominence. Irrespective of the size of the organization, big, small or medium, all can benefit from the insights that come from processing data. These days established companies, as well as new entrants, are using data-driven strategies to compete, capture and

There is a swift change in the way the data is stored and handled with the advent of computers. The programs are able to provide more insights by processing data. Big Data is the new tool for the industry for the better performance in coming future

innovate. One can find instances of big data usage in almost every sector, from manufacturing to automotive, from IT to healthcare.

Mattress and Big Data

The mattress industry can benefit immensely from the big data revolution. The mattress and bedding industry is in a unique situation, wherein the unorganized or local players have played a predominant role. The organized sector has been coming up over the years and has been gaining strength. It is a small set of these companies that are driving innovation through the uptake of digitalization. With robust systems in

place, the organized sector is driving the uptake of new products, making inroads into new regions and ensuring that the products are to the customer likings.

"There are many ways in which companies can use big data and analytics, especially the mattress industry. Considering the wide-scale of operations of mattress companies from procurement of material, manufacturing, retailing, etc., big data can be of much aid in bringing efficiencies and increasing overall productivity," adds Dr. Raj.

He says that the new technology called 'Universal Digitization Platform' (UDP) will help manufacturing companies immensely in going digital and get complete benefit of bigdata. "Big data from processes are integrated into UDP (Universal Digitization Platform by Empulse) to blend the big data with transactional workflow data to produce a powerful ecosystem of information that provide actionable insights", adds Dr. Raj.

To understand how mattress companies can benefit from big data, let's take a look at the ways and means the companies can utilize big data:

Customer management

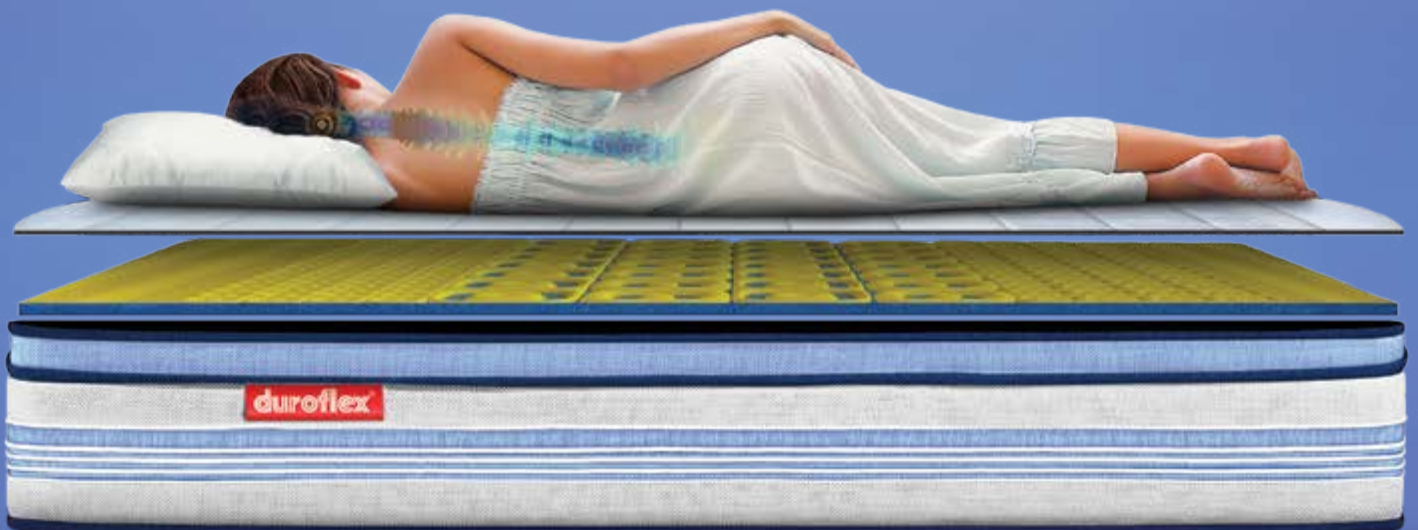
Managing customer expectations is a big challenge these days. Thanks to the Internet, customers are not only aware of what is available in the neighborhood, but also available across the oceans. They can read reviews, compare prices, and look at the various offerings that are available. Also, any flaws or falling in service is widely circulated thanks to social media channels. This is where big data comes in places. Mattress companies engage their customers more engagingly if they have a greater understanding of likes and dislikes. For instance, a prospective customer that has signed up on your website leaves a lot of data in terms of his interests by clicking links. An analysis of the customer behavior can give an insight into the product that he or she is looking for. Based on that, the company could send special offers over mail or WhatsApp to convert the interest into a business.

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Big Data also plays a vital role in integrating physical and digital shopping spheres. An online retailer can easily suggest an offer on the mobile carrier, which can be redeemed at a retail shop.

Crafting new products

Big data is a great way to collect and use consumer feedback. It not only helps you understand what the customer thinks about the product but also what the various possibilities are. This feedback can then be used to fashion new products. Big data tools can be used to uncover deep insights from the data, for instance, break it down to even geographic locations and demographic groups.

Additionally, big data allows testing of various permutations and combinations. For instance, one can gather information about lead times, how material affect costs, performance and more in real-time, thereby allowing to raise the productivity and efficiency of various production processes.

Managing risks: Another way in which big data comes in handy is the ability to manage risks. Enterprise risks are a significant factor these days, and there are a lot of regulations and compliance that bind the company to align with these rules. Typically, big data enables predictive analytics; it allows the company to analyze and deal with any such loopholes within or outside the

Companies can use big data and analytics, considering the wide-scale of operations. Big Data can be of much aid in bringing efficiency and increase the overall productivity

organization.

Increase productivity: Big data provides insights into the functioning of the organization. With critical in-depth reviews, companies can look at the processes and then put in measures that can increase efficiencies. Mattress companies should use big data for enabling small incremental efficiencies. Better management of supply-chain, inventory, etc. can aid in cutting down costs significantly.

Marketing & sales: Marketing and sales are other functions that could benefit much through the intervention of big data and analytics. Big data and analytics allow having a more targeted and empirical approach to marketing. The increase in the RoI is dramatic, as the returns can be weighed against the investments made.

Big data and cloud: Till a few years

back, big data and analytics used to be touted as costly solutions which could be afforded only by a handful of organizations. But all that changed as cloud computing became more pervasive. Today, numerous solutions are available off the cloud, and the best part is that they are very affordable, even small and mid-level companies can implement them.

So let's assume that you are convinced about big data and want to deploy it within your organization. But wait, it is very pertinent to understand the complete picture of implementing data analytics. Usually, companies are driven by the urge to implement the project in a hurry, blunder and don't reap the benefits despite considerable investments in terms of time, efforts and money. It is important to differentiate that there is no endpoint for the usage of big data and analytics. The more you implement, the more you discover, and then go on. Analytics is a constant of upgradation; it is a refinement of the business processes. It should not be taken as a destination, but rather a journey of excellence.

So, here are some big data pitfalls that can be avoided before implementation:

Define the objective: More often than not, companies are fascinated by the fancy terms and the possibilities of automation. They start believing big data to be a panacea to all the enterprise ills. The idea that data can reveal all the answers is not the best approach. To begin with, big data for the sake of data analytics should never be the objective. There must be a clear roadmap on what is the expected outcome, what will be the process, what will be the review, etc. Investment should come after there is clarity on what is desired and how it could be achieved.

Realistic approach: As there's much hype that surrounds big data and analytics, many companies are investing in solutions without any real evaluation of how the technology will impact the end-users. It is important to ensure that all the stakeholders are on the same page; the best approach will be an

Big data can provide the better understanding of data analytics. The more utilized the more industry can get benefitted from this kind of tools



inclusive one. The best way to resolve this issue is to have detailed meetings with teams, defining the various contours of the project. This should be an extensive effort undertaken before the start of the project, as it helps set a realistic approach.

Bad data dilemma: In the olden days of computer programming, there used to be a term GIGO, which used to be a favorite of the programmers. It merely stood for Garbage In, Garbage Out. Namely, nonsense input data produces nonsense output or "garbage". The relevance of this term cannot be overstated even today. Simply put, bad data leads to faulty derivations, which results in bad conclusions. The primary goal of big data analytics is to enable the proper course of action. If the input data into the system is flawed, it can lead to wrong decisions. Hence, the source of data into the system should be checked and tested for authenticity.

Responsibility of data: When it comes to implementing big data projects, companies often limit the discussion to investment, technology and desired outcomes. What they tend to forget is that with data storage and analysis, the issue of data privacy also becomes relevant. Governments across the board have strict norms when it comes to data storage, usage and other privacy-related issues. Thus, at the conceptual levels, it is crucial to understand these regulations and ensure compliance from the start. Protecting against cyber-attacks and data breaches is part and parcel of the big data journey.

To summarize, here are the stepping

stones to implementing big data and analytics within your organization:

- Define the problems clearly
- Identify the right data-sets
- Prepare the systems, processes and people for digital transformation
- Implement robust data governance
- Revise and update regularly.

Thus, while big data and analytics are very unlike any technological solution like ERP or sales-force automation, proper groundwork before the start can lead to desired results. Working with the right partners, vendors, and experts are the key.

Understanding science through data

In the end, it is not only companies that benefit through the implementation of technology; even the academic side can help immensely. Sleep as a bodily function is still a little bit of enigma for researchers. While we seem to know a lot about sleep and how important it is to our bodies, we are not much clear about the scientific aspect or specifically saying, what happens at the neural level. Researchers across various institutions are carrying out detailed studies on the subject of sleep, and guess what, big data and analytics are coming in as handy tools for such research. Tracking data from multiple neural nodes has enabled us to dig deeper into the science of sleep. These refinements and studies have, in a way, contributed to the emergence of a vast gamut of

gadgets and devices that are known as sleep trackers.

This could be an interesting aspect for mattress companies. Can they in some way leverage the research being done in academic institutions and integrate them into their products? For instance, a mattress that has an in-built sleep tracker. Big data and analytics are going to truly revolutionize the industry in the days to come. **CT**

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

Using technology for the better purpose is always a welcome thought. Big data and analytics can come in as handy tools for the mattress industry to explore the new avenues and also make the present industry situation better by providing better understanding of the data that is gathered in the smaller amount of time. This could be interesting to see how the companies will take advantages of such tools that can truly revolutionize the industry in upcoming days

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Saan Global and Devan Announce Collaboration to Accelerate Innovation in Indian Mattress & Bedding Industry

Saan Global Ltd. will be the official distributor of Devan Chemicals for Indian Mattress Market

Devan Chemicals NV (Devan) and Saan Global Ltd. have announced that they will work together to innovate and transform the future of Indian Mattress & Bedding Industry, leading to positive health outcomes for consumers in Indian market with more sustainable products.

Saan Global would play a vital role as distributor to introduce Devan technologies in Indian mattress market. Saan Global intends to use Devan's highly relevant technology to help the Indian foam & mattress manufacturers integrate further into the health and comfort enhancing products. The companies are focusing to set new quality standards for the industry and develop a completely new product range for the end customer. Using Devan's non-metal based antimicrobial / viral reducing product & PCM technology, can make it easier for mattress manufacturers to develop a new health and comfort centric product range, provide technical guidance to produce more sustainable products with modern technique and unfolding new opportunities in healthcare and bedding industry.



Amit Sehgal, MD,
Saan Global Ltd.

"We believe that by combining sustainability, technology, and innovation, we can create value that is greater than the sum of the individual parts. We camp our strategies and innovate new solutions on the foundation of the experience & knowledge gathered in more than 20

years in Industry. With this collaboration we aim to create a new ecosystem of knowledge for Indian Mattress Industry, which would lead to more health and comfort centric products by more edified manufacturers," said Amit Sehgal, MD of Saan Global. Working with Devan gives us an opportunity to transform the market practices, by taking the leverage of our vast customer network.



Sven Ghyselincx,
CEO, Devan
Chemicals

"We are very grateful and looking forward to our collaboration with Saan Global", says Sven Ghyselincx, CEO of Devan. "The Indian market is not only one of the largest consumer markets in the world, it also has long-term upward potential due to the rise of a trendy middle-class and its overall drive for technology innovation. For now, we focus on our BI-OME® (antimicrobial / viral reducing technology) and Thermic® range (PCM technologies) but I am convinced that the ancient origins of Ayurveda offer further future opportunities with Devan's Health & Wellness range."

About Saan Global Ltd:

Established in 1998, SAAN GLOBAL is a professionally managed multi-product organization representing several large and renowned companies in India from the field of speciality and bulk chemicals headquartered in Noida, India. The company has been a pioneer in delivering innovative solutions to Polyurethane Industry.

The brand operates with the penchant to add something new and


hence, provides latest innovative technology that is affordable & sustainable and provides proficient technical support and guidance to optimize the manufacturing. With their experience and strong technical team, Company have set up an ultramodern research & manufacturing facility in Greater Noida, UP along with 7 warehouses across the country. The team has 15 members from sales & 55 members in total. There are 300+ customers on all India basis.

We, as Saan Global, are excited to take this launch innovation and technology to next level of comfort and hygiene.

The company's continuous endeavour is to develop & introduce new technology & services, which helps the manufacturers to create a value product for ultimate end consumers.

About Devan:

Devan Chemicals is a worldwide developer of speciality chemicals for textiles, headquartered in Belgium and with offices in the UK, Portugal and the USA. The company was founded in 1977 and has a strong focus on innovation, research & development and sustainability.

Devan is a leading innovator in the fields of protection (flame retardants), performance (odour control & stain release), thermoregulation (PCM's and cooling technologies such as Moov&Cool®), health & wellness (aromatherapy, R-Vital™ and allergen control) and fibres and yarns (functional masterbatch technologies). 

Boyteks Tekstil developed VGuard mattress ticking with antiviral properties

Boyteks Tekstil has introduced VGuard mattress ticking with antiviral properties. VGuard ticking can be used in protective products such as masks and clothes as well as beddings.

High-activity antiviral particles were used in the development of the VGuard antiviral mattress ticking. This technology targets the protein and fat layers around the virus, damaging and neutralizing the virus, with the principle of the joint operation of materials with different properties. More hygienic textile surfaces can be obtained this way.

Boyteks followed an innovative technique for applying these virus fighters to the fabric. First of all, an alternative filter-like structure was created on the fabric surface to prevent the infectiousness of the virus. With this reinforced surface, a fabric was produced to hold particles and aerosols that can spread through the speech,



sneezing or coughing. Chemicals with antiviral properties synthesized with special formulations were applied precisely to these woven fabrics. In short, VGuard gains technical features with special processes in both weaving

and finishing processes.

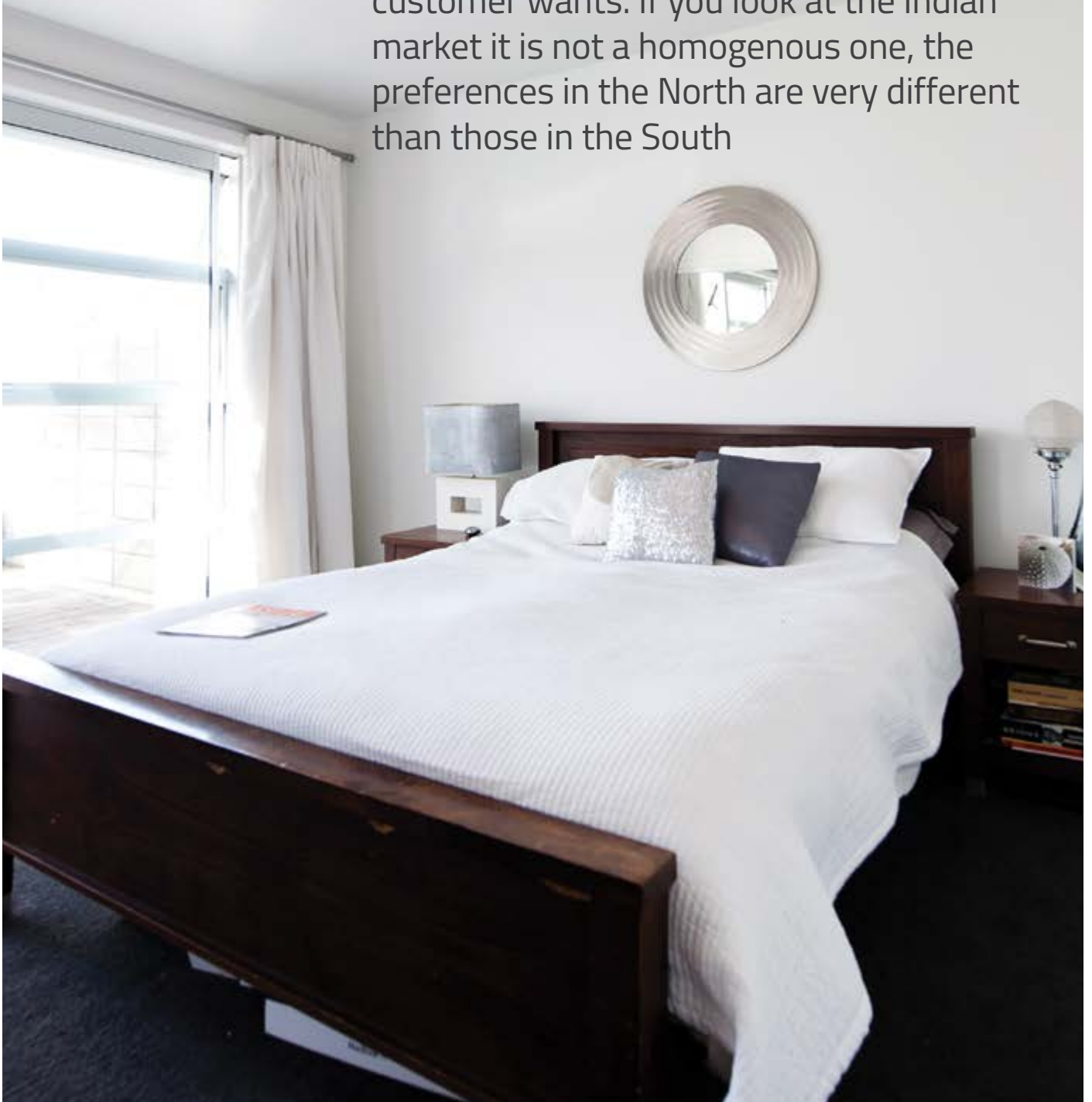
VGuard mattress ticking was produced in 2 and 3 dimensions with a special technique. In this way, the fabric has an optimum level of filtering, that is, protection, as well as allowing people to use it with special air ducts to breathe more easily. Thanks to the softer yarns used in this fabric, the skin comfort of the users is also maximized. This innovative fabric aims to contribute to reducing the spread of the pandemic.

VGuard ticking, the first prototypes of which were developed, were sent to these laboratories for preliminary tests. These tests were performed according to the ISO 18184 method, the international antiviral test standard used to determine the antiviral activity of textile products. As a result of successfully completed tests, the VGuard ticking received a document proving its antiviral properties. Boyteks also filed for a patent for the VGuard ticking. [GT](#)



How Brands should decide on the Product portfolio

Brands have to offer a wide variety of products because that is what the customer wants. If you look at the Indian market it is not a homogenous one, the preferences in the North are very different than those in the South



CCOVID-19 Pandemic has been truly disruptive for our world. From governments to the private sector, almost everyone has been impacted in a myriad of ways. The impact ranged from mild to extremely severe, depending on the industry and geography. While some companies were able to quickly revert when the lockdown was lifted, others like the aviation sector continue to suffer.

In contrast, the mattress industry in India was able to rebound much quicker from the impact of the pandemic. It wasn't as if the industry did not bear a brunt from the lockdown and the subsequent economic gloom. But, unlike other sectors, the industry is growing at a healthy pace, and most of the companies are finding it tough to fulfil the orders.

The reason for this is simple; the bedding industry was quick to evaluate, adapt and innovate. Very quickly, the mattress manufacturers understood the primary concerns of the customers related to safety and hygiene and made efforts to placate them. From coming out with product models that inhibit the growth of bacteria to showcasing the 'touch-less' deliveries, the companies were thus able to reassure the probable customer that they were serious and concerned about the health and security factor. Companies also offered a slew of discounts to the customers, since the price-sensitivity had increased among the users. Even on the physical level, there were conscious efforts undertaken to win back customer trust by reassuring them on the hygiene front. Hence, all the retail showrooms were sanitized correctly; the mattresses were wrapped up multiple plastic coating. And some companies were also offering sanitization service (of the product) once the customer had brought the product. In short, these proactive actions helped in getting the sales cycle up again.

The ability of the Indian mattress industry to tide over the economic downturn is no mean feat. While the mattress industry in India has changed much in the last couple of years, there are unique challenges that it faces.



The mattress industry in India was able to rebound much quicker from the impact of the pandemic. The industry is growing at a healthy pace. The manufacturers understood the primary concerns of the customers

Accounting for more than Rs. 11,000 crore, it is projected to reach Rs. 14,000 crore by 2021 with a CAGR of 9 percent. The primary driver of growth for the industry has been the expansion of the retail sector that has aided the manufacturing to grow at a healthy rate. The good part is that this growth been led mainly by domestic factors such as increased income levels and also due to infrastructural development in terms of the increased number of residential units and an increasing number of hotels in the country.

The biggest challenge for the industry has been the unorganized market, which constitutes more than

50 percent of the overall market. A vast majority of customers unaware about the health impact of an unfit mattress tend to buy it based on price. The local vendor that quotes the lowest price is the one that is chosen. But choosing a mattress should not be like dealing with a government tender. Cheapest is never the best option. Typically, the mattress made by local vendors is that of cotton or coir. These mattresses don't provide adequate support to the body; hence customers seldom can experience a relaxed and composed sleep.

G Shankar Ram, Joint Managing Director, Peps Industries, hints at the general apathy in Indian consumer for the mattress. "Do you know, the mattress comes at the 47th rank in the buy list of Indian customers. It means that there are over 46 priorities for a typical household before they start paying attention to the mattress, things like a microwave, AC, etc. Meanwhile, in the US, the mattress is on the 10th rank in the priority list. This should give an idea about the disparity about the mattress industry in India and the rest of the world," he stated.

Indeed, the mattress is very much low on the radar of consumer mindset. To understand why it is so, one needs to analyze the buying process and the typical pain-points that a customer



faces and what can be done in those regards. By resolving these issues, mattress companies can substantially increase their market share.

Product portfolio

One of the most significant issues that any consumer's face is the sheer number of available options. Buying a mattress is almost akin to buying a new car. There are so many features, factors that a consumer to contend with that it gets boggling. For instance, at the very onset, the customer has to choose what type of mattress to buy; spring, foam, coir, memory foam, hybrid, gel. Subsequently, these broad-categories are further sub-divided into smaller categories making it difficult for a customer to decide.

"Brands have to offer a wide variety because that is what the customer wants. If you look at the Indian market it is not a homogenous one, the preferences in the North are very different than those in the South or for that matter East or West. India has diverse climatic zones, thus in the North and East, foam and innerspring mattress are favoured. Meanwhile, in the South, customers prefer coir mattress. And this variation is not merely in the type of mattress, but also in the fabric and patterns so on. This is why every major brand offers products across the spectrum," states Uttam Malani, Executive Director, Century Mattress.

Century Mattress is one of the companies that is poised to grow at a healthy rate of 25 percent in the current fiscal. One of the keys to this success is to map product variation with hyper-localization. The company continuously tracks market-trends and adopts marketing strategies accordingly. "We analyze the consumer preferences in great detail and offer then choices accordingly. A typical retail showroom cannot stock the complete product portfolio; you can only showcase a limited set of the products. But what those products will be, are dictated by local consumer trends and liking. The product portfolio in our showroom in Mumbai will be quite different from the one in Bangalore," he states.

Value proposition

It would be more like an understatement to say that India is a price-sensitive country. The cost of the product is often the deciding factor while concluding a sale. Consumers are also keenly looking for discounts or bargains. The best indication of this price-fascination can be judged by the success of the Big Days on the online marts like Amazon or Flipkart. Consumers are known to delay purchases for months for want of a 'great deal'. This becomes all the more important for a product category like a mattress that is not regarded very high on the priority list. Thus, getting the pricing right can be a make or break decision for a brand.

The Indian market is not a homogenous one, the preferences in the North are very different than those in the South or for that matter East or West. Hence there are so many options available for the customers now a days in the mattresses.

Pricing is also the reason why the unorganized sector is still powerful in India. With cheap cotton mattress for a few thousand, it is hard for a customer to shell out twice or thrice more in the name of comfort. It isn't a marginal difference but a substantial one.

The discussion should veer away from price to value. The cost of a product is empirical, but the value it has for an individual is a mixture of tangible and intangibles. For instance, an individual with a pain in the lower-back (quite a common problem) will be more amenable to invest the additional sum in an Ortho-mattress than a regular one.

Another aspect that branded companies need to emphasize is the affordability of the brand. There is a notion in the customer's mind that brand mattress is costly and way beyond affordable. Yet that is certainly not the case; the branded mattress can range from as little as a few thousand, to a few lakhs, depending upon the make.

Take the case of Peps, the product portfolio for mattresses starts at Rs 9,000 and goes up to Rs 2.5 lakh. The segmentation of the portfolio is done in three categories; affordable, ultra-affordable and luxury. The affordable segment accounts for 55 percent of the overall sales, while the ultra-affordable range accounts for 30 percent and the luxury taking up the third place at



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15 percent.

“While it is true that Indian customer is price sensitive, but more so he or she is value sensitive. If a brand can convince the customer about the value of the product, its build, quality, longevity, health benefits, etc. Based on all these factors, the branded mattress becomes a natural choice for the customer,” says Shankar Ram.

To build his point further, Shankar shares an instance of how the connection between good sleep and the appropriate mattress has been aiding the spread of organized sector. “As more and more people become aware of the connection, they look at mattress as an investment, not as a cost,” he states.

Online versus offline

Over the past couple of years, online sales have become a significant and viable channel for most mattress companies. Even for the customers, it is a no-brainer, going online for checking on prices and comparing for models is a must even when making purchases in the showroom. With the ubiquity of the Internet and not to mention the fact that during the lockdown necessitated by the COVID-19 Pandemic users had no choice but an online purchase, internet-buying is no more an exception but steadily becoming a norm.

Even mattress companies are realizing the importance of online sales channel and investing significantly into systems and processes. But the real disruptive story lies in the likes of pure-play Internet-based companies like Wakefit. This Bangalore-based company has built its entire business around online sales, from its own website to partnering with other online marts like Amazon and Flipkart.

Ankit Garg, CEO, Wakefit, refers to the company as a sleep specialist. But it wasn't a cakewalk for the online bedding company; customers were wary and unsure of the product. And it took some time for the company to establish itself as a viable option. “Typically, buying a mattress is a very physical experience,



you go to a shop, touch and feel the product, lie on it and then choose. It was indeed a challenge for us to gain consumer trust. But once we did, we were able to serve them much better.”

Indeed, Wakefit has kept its product portfolio reasonably simple, making them available in two categories; Orthopaedic Memory Foam and Dual Comfort Mattress. What they do let you do is doing a lot of customization in terms of size and fit. This ability to customize the mattress is one of the USP of Wakefit. “We constantly study and analyze consumer behaviour and trends. One of the big challenges in India is that there is no standardization of sizes in India; thus a king-size bed in Tamil Nadu will be very different from a king-size in Punjab. This was one of the biggest challenges for customers to opt for a branded mattress. We solved it by giving them a whole range of options, including the ability to customize it. We were able to do it because our business-model is customer-centric,” added Ankit.

Wakefit even has dedicated data-science team that is continually analyzing consumer feedback on mattresses in general and Wakefit in particular. They use this feedback to tweak and refurbish their products. For instance, when they found that the customers were having a tough time adjusting their pillows for softness

or height, they started shipping an additional pouch of fibre fill that can be stuffed in the pillow to make it softer or vice-a-versa. This was possible because they are continually analyzing the trends and responses of customers. **CT**

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

In the end, just like the mattress segment, there is no one-size-fits-all brand strategy. Each company has to make several strategic decisions about their product portfolio, make, pricing, branding, etc. on a variety of factors like geography, competition, customer preferences, etc. Differentiation is the key to success. Companies need to approach differentiation in a variety of ways, depending on their primary channels of delivery. For instance, mattress companies that are attuned to online business could offer customizations in terms of sizes and other accessories. Meanwhile, retail-driven companies need to have different product categories to map to the needs of the customers, a bouquet of 10-12 product categories in a retail showroom should be good.



Manjari Malani Dugar, Director, Relaxwell Mattress, India

WFH has redefined role of a mattress

Manjari Malani Dugar, Director, Relaxwell Mattress, India, says that the pandemic did lead to change in mattress manufacturing supply chain

Q Has the Indian mattress industry changed in its approach, offerings, market distribution direction and customer behaviour during the pandemic?

The pandemic did lead to more manufacturers emphasizing on the focus being given to creating a hygienic environment from production to delivery, both for channel partners and end users. From the customer's perspective, direct-to-home deliveries were preferred to on-premise purchases, but in a post-vaccine scenario, a large section of Indian consumers might return to their old habits of buying in the neighborhood. It's the product offerings and value additions that will gain strength with increasing consumer awareness towards the significance of a mattress for overall health and well-being, especially in a post-Covid world.

Q How can industry players address the issue of inadequate certifications and standardisation?

Emulating best practices from mattress manufacturers around the world that have set standards in terms of product quality and processes could be a step forward.

Q The mattress industry has grown at 10 percent in the last 5 years. Is there still more scope for growth and change?

Even today, a huge section of the

population sleeps on cotton mattresses, especially in rural areas. But with increasing concerns of sleep related issues, even among the working class, consumers are willing to pay more for better quality products. With the changing mindsets of people who now see a mattress as an investment towards a healthy lifestyle, premium products and offerings have a huge potential for further growth. The organized sector will further benefit from the fact that more and more consumers are now wanting to know what goes into a mattress, and whether they are buying a certified quality product or not. Educating customers (also, the role of channel partners in this would be of utmost importance) would be an essential tool for tapping into more opportunities in the current mattress industry. The pandemic along with the work from home culture has also further redefined the role of a mattress and a hygienic sleeping environment, adding to further scope for mattresses and sleep accessories.

Q The uptick that some segments saw in the pandemic phase - was it pent-up demand or new demand trajectory that will build up even more ahead?

Yes, pent-up demand was a partial factor but also related to the previous question, the above stated reasons along with growing demand for construction in residential and institutional segments, attribute to the changing demand trends.

Q Do forays into home furniture and home improvement segments be good expansion areas for mattress players now?

It could be an interesting segment to venture into, especially considering

economies of scope and brand extension to reach a more diverse customer base. It could be a good expansion strategy to create competitive advantage and established players could leverage their brand value to penetrate further into the home segment.

Q How do you aim to leverage your R&D and fine-craftsmanship focus along with the 25 years of experience as you move to the 'new normal'?

The aim is to invest further in R&D, and market research so as to understand the changing customer needs and what attributes in sleep systems to focus on, to enhance our product offering. Our focus will be on upgrading our existing set up, and automation should play a significant role in it.

Q Has the role of a 'bed' changed in an average person's life now?

Yes, the mindset related to or perception of a mattress from being a mere sleeping surface to an integral part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, is being redefined in an average person's life. I would say its Work in Progress and we still have a long way to go. And with an increasing number of customers wanting to know what goes into a mattress, and how the different layers/materials work towards improving their comfort/solving a particular problem, plush and customized offerings would see an increase in demand.

Q Any expansion strategy to strengthen your foothold beyond South India?

In relation to increasing our market presence, we are focusing on new markets in Eastern India and parts of Central and North India. **CT**

ISPF webinar series to discuss on how to accelerate the growth of Branded Mattresses in India



With the sudden onset of the pandemic, the Indian mattress industry seen a dip in their business during the lock-down period and not really due to the fall in the demand of mattress as a product.

Despite lockdown and social distancing, Indian Sleep Products Federation (ISPF) didn't hesitate to connect with its retailer community virtually. ISPF took up Webinar series as a means of knowledge sharing platform. Over 250 retailers participated in the two editions of the webinar and ISPF is getting ready for the third edition in December.

In the first webinar, Wakefit shared its journey of online business and growth. The topic "How to increase the Online Sales" was aptly presented by Ankit Garg of Wakefit. The second webinar was a

promotional webinar presented by Bio Crystals - a European Company.

Both webinars were well accepted by the ISPF Members. During the Retail Partner Certification Program at Vijayawada Mr. Kishore of Sri Foam Agency, raised a query to compare the online sales with offline sales.

He says he learnt how to contact customers at their residence and arrange for door delivery as done in online sales from webinar discussions. Mr. Uma Shankar of Tirumala Comforts, Vishakapatnam expressed his happiness on getting to know about how to handle customers during Covid-19 situation and also to attend to individual customer needs.

Meanwhile Mr. Anurag Mehta, Director, Tirupati Foams Ltd was all praise for the organisers. He says a

lot of points were covered explaining the attitude towards attending a customer when he/she walks in. "Few of the points which were simple yet effective which I received from our dealers. It could be on mattress display or accessories, sanitizing showrooms, greeting customers or clothing of staff members", he says

ISPF plans its third webinar in December on the topic "How to accelerate the growth of Branded Mattresses in India". To make the webinar more interesting and engaging for the audience, ISPF is planning to invite Gen-Nex leaders from Sleepwell, Kurlon, Centuary and Duroflex brands for the panel discussion. Young leaders will share their thoughts on how industry can look at increasing mattress sales in India and Brands can do together to accelerate the mattress consumption in India. [CT](#)

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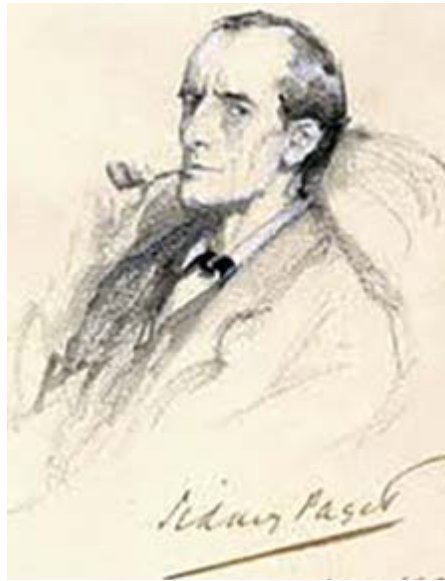
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Elementary, the Holmesian sleep patterns

The fictional detective Sherlock Holmes often used memory tricks and went several nights without sleep whilst solving cases in Victorian London. Prof Jason Ellis, director of the Northumbria Sleep Research Laboratory, spoke about a recent study that found some people have a gene that seems to allow them to sleep less. But would it really be possible for anyone to have such fantastic reasoning abilities without proper sleep? Not really, was the verdict of the study.



Hypnos the God of Sleep

In Greek mythology, Hypnos is the personification of sleep; the Roman equivalent is known as Somnus. His name is the origin of the word hypnosis. Hypnos is the son of Nyx ("The Night") and Erebus ("The Darkness"). His brother is Thanatos ("Death"). Both siblings live in the underworld (Hades) or in Erebus, another valley of the Greek underworld. According to rumors, Hypnos lived in a big cave, which the river Lethe ("Forgetfulness") comes from and where night and day meet. His bed is made of ebony, on the entrance of the cave grow a number of poppies and other hypnotic plants.

Inventions inspired by dreams

Dreams are responsible for many of the greatest inventions of humanity. In fact, dreams can be incredibly productive things, so much so that a host of amazing things have actually been invented while their creators were sleeping. A few examples include; Larry Page (the idea for Google), Nikola Tesla (alternating current generator), James Watson (DNA's double helix spiral form), Elias Howe (The sewing machine), Dimitri Mendeleev (Periodic table), and others.



How dolphins sleep

Birds and aquatic mammals such as dolphins and whales display the remarkable phenomenon of unihemispheric slow-wave sleep: one half of their brain is awake, including an open eye, and the other half shows the electrical signatures of sleep. Dolphins only close one eye when they sleep; the left eye will be closed when the right half of the brain sleeps, and vice versa. This type of sleep is known as unihemispheric sleep as only one brain hemisphere sleeps at a time.

The most massive bed in the world
The biggest mattress in the world was made by Dolidol, a Moroccan furniture and bedding company. It created a big mattress that measures 20 meters in length to 16 meters wide and 1.4 meters tall and weighs 11 tons. It can accommodate more than 200 people lying, required 1,600 hours of work.

Are you sleep deprived?

If it takes you less than 5 minutes to fall asleep at night means that you are sleep deprived. Ideally a 10 to 15 minutes can be interpreted as you're still tired enough to sleep deeply, but not so exhausted. If it takes more than 20 minutes to fall asleep regularly, it implies that you are suffering from sleep disorder. you feel sleepy during the day.



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The Longest Fictional Sleeper
While Peter Powers holds the record of the maximum days slept by a man, namely eight days, in the world of fiction, that won't count for much. For instance, Rip Van Winkle slept for 20 years straight, but then don't forget Sleeping Beauty was asleep for 100 years, and so did all else in her kingdom. Closer home, we all know that Kumbhakarna, the brother of Ravana, slept for 6-months in a row and 6-months awake. But that is no match for the length of time King Muchukunda slept according to the Bhagwat Purana. King Muchukunda was an ancestor of Lord Rama and sought a boon of sleep from Indra and then went on to sleep uninterrupted for a good 4 million years.



The Cavemen slept on beds

Humans were making themselves comfy on plant mattresses as long as 77,000 years ago, a study has found - and our ancestors were surprisingly clever at getting a good night's sleep. The world's 'oldest beds' found - and the cavemen who slept on them 77,000 years ago were at a location at a rock shelter in South Africa. Researchers discovered that after around 73,000 years ago, the inhabitants were conscious of hygiene and regularly burned their bedding after use.



Men and Women dream differently
Researchers have found some differences between men and women when it comes to the content of their dreams. In several studies, men reported dreaming about weapons significantly more often than women did, while women dreamed about references to clothing more often than men. Another study showed that men's dreams tend to have more aggressive content and physical activity. In contrast, women's dreams contain more rejection and exclusion, as well as more conversation than physical activity.

Sleep in the animal kingdom

The animal kingdom is also full of long-sleepers and short-nappers. Giraffes sleep only 1.9 hours a day (in 5-10 minutes sessions), while koalas in Australia sleep up to 22 hours. Cats sleep, on average, for 15 hours a day, while rats clock up to 20 hours a day. Smaller animals, which often have higher rates of brain metabolism, tend to require more sleep, while larger animals generally get less sleep.

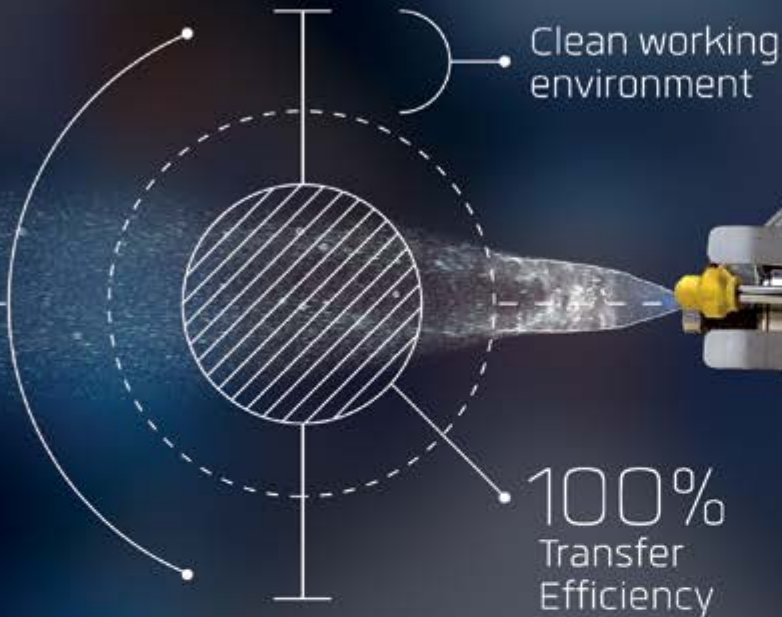


Sleep records

While Randy Gardner currently holds the official scientific record for longest sleep deprivation. In 1964, he kept awake for 264 consecutive hours (11 days) without the use of any stimulants. Peter Powers holds the longest sleep record; a Hypnotist from the UK has the record of most prolonged sleep to date. He stayed asleep for eight days straight, and the European media even covered this feat.



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SUMMER DAWN

A vibrant orange/red energizing the morning sky, lighting the equally alluring warm colors of the smooth contours in rocks formed over millions of beautiful sunrises. It's also the color charged with the power of a day filled with texture and possibility, swelling in warmth and fizzing with visual energy.

FLORAL SONG

Brings blossoms and laughter together in a delicate bouquet of grounded notes and confident optimism. A deep, warm and satisfyingly rich purple the color speaks to natural tones that connect and inspire.

SOOTHING EARTH

A smooth green grounded in the textures of natural patterns on our planet's surface. It is a journey into quiet and calm that reminds us of treasured days in open fields with nature's warm embrace.

FOREST WALKS

A deeper, rich green at peace with the environment and surrounded by the clarity and support of the natural world. It is a rich signal color with strength and depth; a classic choice made new with the subtle power of a darker tone.

RIVER CALM

A sparkling ocean tone with an airy lightness. The color is visually nourishing, bright without sharpness and strong without shouting. It brings attention to its message of connecting with the waters of life.

PROUD ROSE

A stunning, deep pink that is vibrant and unafraid, bringing an unmissable character of bold beauty to our color palette. It is a perfect choice for any product that needs to stand out in the crowd and bring new life to the eyes.

MAJESTIC SKIES

Reaches deep into the spectrum for a bold and confident blue. It is a bridge between the fragile world of human industry and the stretching cosmos beyond. Inspired by the rich hues of unfolding galaxies, this color is ideal for products looking to connect the everyday with the bigger picture.

Inspirations from nature help Milliken's ColorDirection 2021 sing in Harmonic Synergy.

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