



Shopping and gifting is an essential part of the celebrations of festivity. The festival season is the time when the people fast and feast, give and take, spend and splurge. This season brings a surge in the Indian economy too. However, COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed the world as we know it. But this year is a little different from the other due to the pandemic situation. People are living differently, buying differently and in many ways, thinking differently. To gear up its retail and online stores for the festive season, the companies have announced many schemes and products like other years.

Due to the current situation the online market has grown, but demonstrating flexibility and stiff resilience, the retail sector has coped up well with the demanding circumstances. In response to the unprecedented times, uncertainties, identifying newer consumer patterns, the sector has revamped its operations to align with the new orders.

### VIRTUAL IS THE NEW NORM:

This year, also sees a shift in the behaviour and consumption patterns of the customers especially homemakers have adopted digital marketing due to the pandemic. According to the latest EY report 'Sentiments of India: homemakers, backbone of our homes', Indian homemakers are increasingly adopting digital payments and online applications for both work and entertainment. 84% of them mentioned that they would prefer celebrating with only members from their household and 44% wish to avoid crowded marketplaces. The fear is stronger in high spenders with 52% likely to avoid visiting crowded marketplaces. Online sales are expected to pick up with 28% homemakers planning to shop online for most festive requirements.

The study explores shift in the behaviour and consumption patterns of homemakers and their households across areas like digital adoption, increase in shopping basket size, festive spending, work ambitions, and the evolving social dynamics of homemaking. The findings are based on the survey responses of 385 Indian homemakers across the urban, adult population across India.

According to, Sanjeev Mehtani, Country Manager – Sales, Acer India, "The festive season has provided some much-needed cheer to the pandemic-hit consumer goods industry, with retail sales in the 10-day Navratri to Dussehra period not only topping last year's numbers but also registering strong growth signs that seem to indicate the beginning of a revival in the economy and consumer confidence. Our channel partners have been relentlessly focusing on customer value and have also been



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greatly helpful in scaling sales faster and more efficiently. We came up with a channel support programme called Acer Saath Saath to help boost the confidence of our channel partners during this festive season. Also, to encourage a healthy competition among the channel partners, we have offered reward programmes like Acer Diwali Ummeedon Wali and Acer Monitor Premier League."

Sanjeev sees the trend of Work-From-Home and Learn-From-Home as a huge opportunity for them as they see a huge surge in demand as a direct result of the pandemic. He feels, "The sudden shift to work from home and remote learning during the coronavirus pandemic has resulted in increased demand for laptops. Also, the unprecedented surge in people working from home as well as students attending online classes have eventually prompted an increase in sales of laptops. The surge in demand comes from those who are upgrading their laptops to be used for work from home purposes, which is the new segment that never existed before. This has resulted in a spike in sales of laptops in the mainstream segment. People are moving up the value chain in terms of buying a full solution product and not settling for entry-level products.

Consequently, we have been witnessing a spike in sales across the board. At Acer, we strongly believe that our Retail and Online Channels complement each other, and therefore we've always been pursuing progression in both. We believe, both Online and Offline shopping are equally important. A large portion of customers prefer retail purchase with touch and feel. With our e-store, we can give an omnichannel experience which benefits retail partners. For us, both play a crucial role in taking our brand to our customers and a key component for growth. We are using both

traditional and digital marketing to shore up sales. Through different schemes, we are able to maintain the pricing across GTMs which is eventually enabling our end consumers to purchase at their convenience. Acer Omni Channel experience is specially designed to cater to the needs of our Acer Exclusive retail partners in the current COVID-19 scenario. This special initiative is built to ensure ease of purchase, keep partners and customers safe, and promote business continuity.”

Commenting on the same, Ameen Khwaja, Founder & CEO, pTron, says, “We have come out with a handful of products for the festive season. We have seen a steady rise in demand for our TWS and wireless products despite the pandemic and the economic slowdown. So, we have launched 6 new products in the past month including TWS earbuds, Bluetooth neckbands and power banks.

We have witnessed the growth of 10x this festive season compared to the same period last year. Currently, we hold a share of 24% in the market festive sales with over 120K units sold as on date. Our online channels have been performing particularly well. But we will also be looking at escalating our retail services to offer a safer and better consumer experience.

We have spent most of the year designing and introducing products suitable for those working from home. Audio accessories and power banks have become essentials in this current work from home model and we have recognized this early. So, we're currently seeing a positive demand curve.”

In this festive season, Panasonic has introduced a slew of exciting offers and promotions on all its electronics, home appliances, beauty and lifestyle products. Suguru Takamatsu, Divisional Head, Consumers Sales Division, Panasonic India says, “At Panasonic, festival season began with Onam on a positive note signaling a return of consumer demand and we believe this will continue to remain the trend for the upcoming festive season. And through our new festive offers we aim to benefit consumers by offering a combination of quality products at great pricing along with added rewards which we expect will drive an uptick in demand. We are hopeful that the festive season will help recover the deficit incurred in the last few months due to the pandemic.

'New Dreams New Celebrations' festive offer presents consumers with an opportunity to buy their favorite products at discounted rates and with added benefits. Exciting promotional offers, special finance schemes, cashback offers, warranty benefits, free installations, introduced across categories including Televisions, Refrigerators, Washing Machines, Air-Conditioners, Microwaves, Lumix Cameras, Beauty and lifestyle products, to make this year's festive season purchases even more delightful and economical for the customers.”

## FESTIVITY BRINGS BOOST TO THE MARKET:

Whereas, Mike Chen, General Manager, TCL India, comments, “This Diwali we are running campaigns like youbuywepay, then our very own TCL QLED are starting from 45,990 for this festive season and also we have partnered with OTT platforms to give upto 50% discount on packages for the TCL consumers. Also, yes we launched TCL soundbar as well as our new 4K Android Tv P615.

This festival is indeed providing a boost to the market, there's a demand for high end technology and 50'inches & 55'inches are in demand. Both retail and online has its own significant customer base, however, this year online has become a major part of the ongoing business. Initially, people were a bit apprehensive but in India festive season has always been a blessing for the electronic industry. TCL is here for the past so many years, so we are well versed in managing the demand and flow.”

Sameer Bhatia, Director Asia Pacific, Consumer Business Group and Country Manager, SAARC & India, Seagate Technology, says, “Seagate offers a wide gamut of storage solutions to help users to store and protect their precious moments captured during the festive season. We believe in maximizing data's potential and in this festive season we are maximizing happiness for our customers in India. For all the gamers in India, professionals and amateurs, Seagate recently announced its new line of revolutionary internal and external storage solutions. The products announced included Seagate FireCuda 520, FireCuda 120, FireCuda Gaming SSD, and BarraCuda Fast SSD.

We also announced the 18TB SkyHawk Artificial Intelligence drives in India. SkyHawk AI is the world's first purpose-built hard drive for artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled Surveillance solutions, enabling quicker and smarter surveillance. The new drive supports deep learning and machine learning workload streams for Edge applications with ImagePerfectAI. It provides unmatched performance and reliability in security and performance and is ideal for all looking to ramp-up their security this festive season.”

Seagate is committed to delivering high performance storage solutions to customers in India, through both online and offline channels. Across both channels, their partners are helping them cater to the requirements of customers in the Indian market. With the growing business opportunities during the festive season and the need to store the digital data securely, their focus continues to be on engaging effectively with the partners and distributors network. Our channel ecosystem continues to grow in numbers and reach as they better understand evolving opportunities in the current market



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scenario and double down on their efforts to engage with their partners and customers more closely than ever.

Sameer perceives, “We delivered solid September quarter results supported by strong recovery in the video and image applications market and healthy cloud data center demand, which drove double digit year-over-year revenue growth for our mass capacity storage solutions. We see indications for Enterprise demand to improve and we expect this to continue as the broader markets gradually recover, supporting our positive December quarter outlook and reinforcing our revenue expectations for the fiscal year.”

Rajesh Goenka, Director- Sales & Marketing, RP tech India also feels this year the demand is higher than supply. As regards to profitability, the retail channel is always profitable, sustainable and consistent. In E-Commerce, business happens in spurt and varies in margins at all levels.

Rajesh says, “This year due to shortage of stock and a wide gap between demand and supply, all incentive schemes and promotional offers are limited for channel partners and consumers. However, RP tech India has launched several slab-based incentive schemes to boost the morale of our channel partners and help them liquidate their stocks this festive season. We are also offering performance rewards to partners who achieve their business targets. Due to the worldwide COVID-19 crisis, brands have restricted new product launches. However, we believe that the situation has started improving and soon business will come on track.

As far as the IT industry is concerned, the pandemic has impacted the industry positively as there is a huge demand for IT hardware solutions for remote working and distance learning. As the economy is coming back to its track, the IT consumption is on the rise and it will definitely give a much needed impetus to the business, which has recorded a sluggish growth since last 6 months.”

Raghu Reddy, Chief Business Officer, Mi India is also overwhelmed with the sales

result this year, he says, “We are overwhelmed with the response and support we have got from consumers and Mi fans. It's incredible to see retailers and partners coming together, putting their best foot forward during these unprecedented times. This festive season was the biggest shopping season for us. We are especially grateful towards our retail family that has come together this season to help us achieve this milestone.

The 5 million mark is a testimony of our consumers' trust in our products. To the best of our knowledge, no other brand has ever achieved this before. We, at Mi India aim to keep delivering the highest quality products at honest prices.”

Raju Pullan, Senior Vice President, Consumer Electronics Business, Samsung India, comments, “This has been the best October ever for us, as consumers across the spectrum looked to upgrade their lives especially in the tier 2 and tier 3 cities. The demand is shifting towards premium electronics products. We have tried to make all our retail touch points as safe as possible for our consumers.”

Ankur Goel, Managing Director, Poly India & SAARC feels, “It is clear that the way we work has undergone a paradigm shift. Hybrid working and working from home is here to stay. Many of us started the year working from home, and are now making the transition to a hybrid working model that puts more focus on work being what you do, instead of work being somewhere you go.”

Ankur clearly depicts that, “Technology has become the literal lifesaver for many of us, with cloud-based services like Zoom, Microsoft Office and Teams, Dropbox, Google Suite and more proving to be absolutely essential in helping businesses stay productive and above water, while also helping people staying employed and otherwise occupied throughout global quarantines and the subsequent restricted movement initiatives put in place by governments the world over.

With the holiday season here, we are once again faced with the challenge of racking our brains to come up with interesting and practical



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gifts for friends and family. This festive season we bring the EagleEye Mini, a handy little USB-powered HD video conferencing camera which connects to your laptop or home computer, and features 1080P HD video to bring clarity to your meetings, while 4x electronic zoom and 74-degree field of view makes conference calls feel like in-person meetings. There are also Voyager 6200 UC and Voyager 5200 UC headphones.”

This festive season Western Digital has offered special deals across their popular range of WD and SanDisk storage devices for consumers. The customers also stand a chance to win an HP Envy Laptop worth INR 1,14,000/- every week till 15th March 2021.

According to Jaganathan Chelliah, Director Marketing, India, Western Digital, “With work from home becoming the new normal, users are looking for power-packed innovative gadgets that help them boost their performance and include password protection and other features to help ensure the security of their data. During this festive season, we expect to see good demand for all categories of storage. The current environment has accelerated the pace of digitization, and we are also witnessing new trends such as uptake of gaming, working from anywhere, a surge in content creation, smart videos, and video security, to name a few. These trends have given rise to the demand for storage.”

He further comments, “The pandemic has disrupted lives and boosted digital transformation across sectors for business continuity. We are witnessing new trends such as uptake of gaming, working from anywhere, the surge in content creation, smart videos, and video security, to name a few. With all our daily activities shifting online, this has raised the demand for storage; additionally, the right storage solutions have become crucial. For example, when working from home or schooling from home, you need storage devices to take backup. The user wants a high capacity device rather than a superfast speed. We have our palm-sized, portable, WD My Passport HDD portfolio with up to 5TB capacity built specially to take backup.”

Ashish P. Dhakan, MD & CEO, Prama Hikvision India sees the festival season in India as an opportune time to offer special schemes to the channel partners. He says, “We at Prama Hikvision are upbeat about the prospects of bouncing back by implementing special schemes for our channel partner. As the Indian security market is getting its groove back, we have meticulously planned attractive festival offers. It is heartening to see that we are getting an overwhelming response to our festival season schemes. We hope that this unprecedented upswing in the market would continue to drive the growth further.”

Expecting a good growth Ashish says, “The market demand has surged exponentially as the businesses are bouncing back. With continuous improvements in sales graphs, the business sentiments are returning to normalcy across the channel. Retail is a more profitable channel of buying compared to online from Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) perspective. Going by the quintessential nature of B2B security business, B2B retail has remained a traditional benchmark of profitability. It is a robust security business model with service and support unlike other businesses. The sustainability and growth prospects are supported by the repeat orders and demand for spares and key components, which is not the case with online business.”

Being a distribution channel driven security company with 11 years of successful track record and impeccable trust, at Prama Hikvision they would ensure that their partners take the growth story forward. Safely adopting the online business channels while retaining strong brick and mortar channel structure is the way forward. They expect their partners to drive growth by tapping their B2B security business potential while exploring the latest e-commerce trends. Ashish says, “We are getting very good responses from our loyal channel partners. We are offering special schemes to our partners and the response is phenomenal. We have taken adequate measures to resolve the challenges related to schemes and logistics. The pandemic has impacted the demand in the market. The lockdown in all phases had the adverse impact on the market sentiment and the consumers. We hope and pray that markets will bounce

back to normalcy with festive spirits.”

## DIGITAL GIFTING SPIKES THE RISK OF CYBER FRAUDS:

Adjusting to the demands of the pandemic, a large portion of consumers have migrated on to digital platforms and increasingly prefer to shift the entire purchase cycle online. Driven by this shift, more and more consumers are resorting to augmented and virtual reality to shop for everything under the sun, right from fashion goods and furniture to kitchen appliances. Not only the WFH, the new norm has given rise to cyber frauds but this digital purchasing is also increasing the risk of digital frauds.

Keeping the online safety of all netizens in mind, K7 Computing, has announced the launch of a Celebration Pack for the Diwali and festival season. The special retail pack includes K7 Total Security for Windows with enhanced benefits: free three months’ additional validity and a free copy of K7 Mobile Security for smartphones. This special pack offers protection to the netizens during the festival time not only on their PCs, but also on their smartphones.

Elaborating on the Celebration Pack, J Kesavardhanan, Founder and CEO, K7 Computing, says, “The safety of every computing user is our priority. The 2020 pandemic has been a significant challenge and it is critical that Indians should be able to celebrate with digital safety. We are determined that cyberattacks should not disrupt this festival season and have launched the Diwali Celebration Pack to protect netizens on the PCs and smartphones they rely on the most to wish, gift, shop, and spread joy. It is the ideal gift to give to yourself and your loved ones.”

In conclusion, the festive season 2020 is not like never before for both consumers and businesses. Companies have kept their hopes high and continue to work towards the best possible outcomes. Everyone has denoted the festive season as a ray of hope among the darkest clouds of the pandemic.