Winds Of Change! Brand Narratives Undergoing A Revolution With The New Normal

In the wake of COVID-19, brands and malls are trying to understand the current customer sentiments and are adapting to the changing trends. They are introducing initiatives that ensures customer safety while offering them a unique shopping experience. The current situation has caused change in consumer behaviour and has taught brands to ideate new ways to connect with their customers. Some of the initiatives adapted by brands are shopping over Whatsapp, Video Calling, curb side pickups and special home visit deliveries.

Inorbit Bangalore is a perfect example as it was one of the first malls in the city to come up with a novel idea to ensure a safe and convenient shopping experience by setting up stalls at one of the housing societies in the vicinity. This is the first time Bengaluru has seen such an innovative experience that allows customers to freely and safely shop from the comforts of their home areas with minimum public contact.

"Our focus is to stay connected to our consumers digitally and service them in a safe environment. We have introduced services like video shopping feature and curb side pick-up." said **Naviin Ibhrampurkar, Head of Marketing and Corporate Communication.**

Envi Salon has been strictly following social distancing norms by keeping customer contact to the minimum. Talking about recent changes adapted post COVID-19, ***Renu Kant, owner of Envi Salons***, said *"As a brand we have adopted extensive safety measures for both our client and staff. Clients are taken with appointments only to avoid overcrowding. We also encourage consultation on phone through video calling so the customer can just come and take the pre-consulted services".*

With the upcoming festive season the mall's are confident of revival of demand. During such crisis scenarios malls are taking efforts to entice customers by creating welcoming ambiences with themed décor for every season. Décor has always been a crucial part to build up interest among customers. It helps to enhance the visual appeal of the mall and creates a great ambience to stroll around. "In the decor space for malls and weddings, the way forward will be art installations and decor that is visually engaging with tech integration such as use of projection mapping, motion activation, light programming, sensor-activation and making the decor truly experiential while ensuring social distancing and also for those who are celebrating the occasion remotely and viewing it on digital

platforms.", said ***Mark Raj, co-founder of Avant Experiential I Avant Weddings.***

With on-ground events taking a backseat, Malls have started collaborating with influencers to engage with their customers. These influencers have a great pull factor as they are live, interacting with people and there is a sense of connect. Prominent personalities like stand-up comedians, chefs, singers, dancers, etc. hosting live party from the mall and engaging with audience is surely a fun activity to engage with customers.

"*The thought of malls opening was an exciting news, and to host a virtual party for Inorbit, just added to my excitement. It is crucial to find innovative ways to engage with followers, while maintaining the norms of social distancing, and Inorbit's virtual party was successful in doing it. We hope more fun events are planned for customers as we are also approaching to the festive season.*" **said Nagma Mirajkar (an Indian social media star)**

On the onset of COVID-19, brands and companies are coming up with innovative methods to service their customers. At Schbang, we have also adapted to the change. Retailers are exploring opportunities that lie in digital and that is exactly what we have enabled for Inorbit. Whether it is about aiding consumers to better their fashion choices during the lockdown or gearing up for mall openings and inviting various local celebrity influencers and building consumer trust about their safety in the premises along with value added services, our focus has been to communicate all in a cohesive fashion while being creative and entertaining. The adoption and mapping of insights by Inorbit is commendable and it has been a great partnership undertaken in this period." **said Harshal Karia – Founder of Schbang Digital Solutions**

Malls are one stop destination for a fun and entertaining day. They have always been a favourite hub to hang out and spend time while exploring the services and retail stores available. Malls are hoping for a soon recovery of the situation and are expecting to entertain and service customers again at full pace.

About Inorbit Malls:

Inorbit Malls (India) Private Limited a subsidiary of the K. Raheja Corp, is the pioneer of the mall culture in India. The company opened its first mall in 2004 at Malad, Mumbai. Today, it has a national presence with 5 operating Malls in major metro cities Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, Vadodara, Bengaluru and Cyberabad. Inorbit Malls have an universal appeal and plays an integral role in the life of consumers; they are a one-stop destination for food, fashion and entertainment. Inorbit has won more than

75 awards including India’s Most Trusted Mall by Brand Trust Report 2014 and has been recognized at various national & international forums like IMAGES Awards, Asia Pacific Shopping Centre Awards, WARC, ICSC, Asia Consumer Engagement Forum, EFFIEs and ABBYs for their commitment in establishing community connect.