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Chief Marketing & Chief Customer Officer |  
Shoppers Stop



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**What's the most interesting thing you've done outside of work in the last 12 months?**

A lot of my time outside of work is when I travel. The most interesting one recently was to Benares. It was an extremely rich experience of Indian culture, visual theatre and traditional food, and a delight to experience and photograph.

I also found Berlin fascinating. The emergence of a unique expression in art and music coming from a traumatic history, gives the city a very unique character.

**Name a brand marketing executive or corporate personality - Indian or international - you admire. And tell us what about her/him is admirable.**

It's hard to deny the wrap dress' iconic status — it's been one of the hardest working garments in any hard-working woman's wardrobe. Created by Diane von Furstenberg in 1974, the wrap dress has played a huge role in the lives of women. Notable, however, is the fact that she and her husband have pledged to give over \$1 billion in charitable contributions to help organisations in the public spaces, community building, education, arts, human rights and environmental sectors. Philanthropic leaders are extremely inspiring and in my eyes, she is a real legend.

**If your brand were an animal, what would it be - and why?**

If my brand were an animal, I would like it to be an octopus. The extra arms are super useful to manage the marketing disruption. I love its ability to hide in plain sight as well. We all need the 9 brains and 3 hearts to be able to handle the complex environment.

**What was the biggest challenge you and your team faced in the last 6-12 months - and what did you learn from it?**

I think one of the biggest challenges is stitching all the data together which helps you look at the consumer in a more holistic and contextual manner. While there is a lot of data, the challenge in gleaming the insights and using that across channels in time and with relevant content is still a challenge, thanks to complexity of the data, its incompleteness and many a times its inaccurate capture or structures.

What we have been doing is using bite-sized data and specific use cases that help us create campaigns and solutions that can connect with consumers more powerfully.

**Which outside forces or trends impact consumer behaviour in your category most? Give an example.**

I think Indian consumers have faced a lower rise in income than expected and has been below inflation levels. This is especially true of salaried professionals. Add to this the uncertain economic conditions have made consumers rethink discretionary spends.

**Marketers across segments have fetishised the millennial. But hand on heart, which demographic will drive growth for your brand over the next 12 months?**

The core consumer for Shoppers Stop is the young family whose purchase decisions are driven by the woman and her choices. This segment has been driving maximum growth for us. In addition, early career aspirations of 18-25 year olds is an emerging segment that finds favour in premium products as they come into discretionary income which they manage and control themselves.

**If you could advertise on only one medium for the next 6 months, what would that be - and why?**

Given only one marketing strategy, I would focus on our loyalty program customers and reach them through digital means. The 6.4 million base of 'First Citizens' contributed to 82 per cent of our revenues today and is a rich asset of relationships that we learn from, understand, and create for.

**What do agency partners grumble about most, today?**

The pressure of timelines on delivery is a huge challenge for agencies in a real-time environment where the consumers are shifting, the marketing plans are being more flexible and agile, and it forces agencies to rethink their internal mechanisms to deliver. ■