

Chairman, EPCH represents sector at Board of Trade Meeting

A high level meeting of the Board of Trade (BoT) was held on 12th September 2019 at hotel Ashok, New Delhi, under the Chairmanship of Shri Piyush Goyal, Hon'ble Minister of Railways and Commerce. The objective of Board of Trade is to have regular discussions and consultation with trade and industry and advise the Government on policy measures related to Foreign Trade Policy in order to achieve the objective of boosting India's trade. During this BoT meeting, discussions were held on various issues related to promotion of exports and domestic manufacturing as well as reduction in imports, issues related to free trade agreement, domestic competitiveness, etc. Mr. Ravi K Passi, Chairman, EPCH, attended the Board of Trade meeting and represented the handicrafts sector.



Chairman, EPCH, Mr. Ravi K Passi, seen with Shri Sidharth Nath Singh, Minister for MSME & Export Promotion, Uttar Pradesh



Besides the Honourable Minister of Commerce & Industry, also present in the meeting were Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of State for Commerce & Industry and Shri Som Prakash, Minister of States for Commerce &

Industry. Several state industry ministers were also present besides, many senior officers of Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Textiles and Minister of Finance.

Chairman EPCH, raised issues pertaining to the handicrafts sector which included allocation of additional funds for the sector, extension of Rebate of State & Central Taxes and Levies (RoSCTL), benefit for handicrafts sector, reopening of office of the DGFT at Moradabad, deemed export benefit for foreign tourist sales, freight support for exporters and many others. Mr. Passi met Shri Sidharth Nath Singh, Minister for MSME & Export Promotion, Uttar Pradesh, and raised UP specific issues which included reopening of office of DGFT office at Moradabad which the Hon'ble Minister (UP) also raised during his address. ■

Ethical retailers make more money: research



33%

of consumers are choosing to buy from brands they believe are doing social or environmental good

As new research reveals a growing consumer interest in ethical brands, Fairtrade shares its key responsible trading tips with retailers. With new research from Salmat finding that a third of shoppers are willing to walk away from a purchase if they don't like the brand's values, social responsibility is more important than ever. Making a difference by tackling exploitation in supply chains is easy, says Molly Harriss Olson, CEO of Fairtrade Australia and New Zealand.

Retailers have an opportunity to be leaders in the move towards sustainable consumption—a force of good in the world, by conducting themselves in a way that is transparent, accountable and sustainable in the long term. The best way to tackle exploitation within the supply chain is to rethink the stock acquisition process. For smaller and medium-sized retailers, although there is no requirement to report, accountability and transparency are regarded

as good practice and the way of the future. Not only is ethical conduct increasingly essential, but it's good for business, with new research revealing that 34% of Australian shoppers are willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products. The survey also found climate change and the environment rank as the most important issue with 57% of consumers, closely followed by data privacy & security at 51%. Ethical conduct is increasingly a valuable asset for retailers, says Harriss Olson. For retailers to retain their social license to operate, it's now expected that all organisations take sustainability and their environmental impact seriously. Sustainability is helping retailers' bottom line and in ensuring success across the triple bottom line—people, planet and profit. You can bet that the companies that make sustainability a priority will still be around in 30 years, compared to the ones who collapsed because they didn't address issues, like slavery, in their supply chain. ■ Source: Giftguide Australia

“Responsible retail” a factor in Holiday 2019 shopping

Accenture’s 13th annual holiday shopping survey finds consumers ready to spend – some of them conscientiously. The online survey of 1,500 US consumers found that Americans expect to spend \$637 on holiday shopping this year, on average, with approximately six in seven respondents planning to spend either the same (57%) or more (28%) than they did last year. On average, men expect to spend approximately 15% more than women — \$685 versus \$588. Gift cards and clothing/footwear topped the list of planned purchases.

However, the percentage of those who anticipate spending less rose slightly compared to last year, from 11% to 15%. The two leading factors that respondents cited as affecting their holiday shopping spend are rising food bills (cited by 32% of respondents) and the desire to limit their credit card debt (31%). The survey also found consumers want clear labelling that identifies products made in sustainable or ethical ways. They also want to see the origin of materials and ingredients and offered the option of packaging-free products and deliveries.

In addition consumers are now looking at the carbon footprint of the different delivery options retailers offer, and half said they would opt for delivery options with a lower environmental impact, such as slower shipping or in-store pick-up. Half also said they would be willing to skip gift-wrapping to reduce waste. 47% said it’s extremely important or very important for retailers to demonstrate environmental awareness when it comes to deciding which retailer to shop with during the holidays. 54% said they would make use of recycling services to reduce waste if retailers offered them.

“Responsible” shoppers believe retailers should address wider social issues through their business practices and working conditions, and 45% said they are more likely to do their holiday shopping with retailers that do. Shoppers are becoming more health-conscious. ■ *Source: Home Textiles Today*

Female shopping power: 5 Trends worth watching

NPD consulted industry analysts to find what purchasing trends are driven by women in the USA. They came out with five major trends worth watching:

Vintage Vibes - Instant film, buyers of which are nearly two-thirds female and skew young (Based on a Checkout E-commerce analysis of online buyer), is a growing category in consumer tech. Sales of instant film (similar to the Polaroid products of the 1970’s) increased 8% year-over-year in the 12 months ending July 2019, shown by our Retail Tracking Service. Outside of the holiday season, June is the top dollar-grossing month for the category as young consumers capture their milestones, like graduation season and prom, in a unique and tangible way.

Backpacks are the Answer - Backpacks are fast becoming the new prominent work bag among women, explained Accessories and Footwear Industry Analyst Beth Goldstein. Compared to traditional totebags, weight is more evenly balanced by backpacks, making them more comfortable to carry to and from meetings and while commuting. While handbags and totes declined in the 12 months ending in July compared to previous 12 months, our Retail Tracking Service shows fashion backpacks and lifestyle backpacks grew 13% and 7%, respectively.

Emphasis on Ingredients - Women are increasingly turning to online research to better understand the ingredients in - and the brands behind - their facial skincare products. As product information becomes more accessible, female consumers are using their spending power to ensure their voices are heard; they’re supporting brands that offer natural ingredients and transparency.

Girls Are Gamers - With the rise of e-sports and video game streaming services, gaming is fast becoming one of the hottest opportunity areas for brands to engage with Gen Z. Data shows 9.3 million U.S. girls aged 13 - 17 play video games, compared to 11.4 million boys. Among gamers, girls are more likely than boys to play mobile games (95% for girls vs. 90% for boys), and they are less likely than boys to play on consoles and PCs.

Older, Wiser, and More Active - Gen X shoppers are the fastest-growing segment in the women’s active apparel market, our Consumer Tracking Service reports. This group accounted for 25% of women’s active sales in the 12 months ending July 2019, up from 22% the previous year. [4] This presents an opportunity for brands and retailers to target premium active products to Gen X consumers who, on average, have a higher income than Millennials and Gen Z—two groups that historically have dominated the category. Additionally, women are wearing activewear as fashion staples beyond exercise, opening the door for more products that are comfortable yet fashionable. It’s worth noting that while women are major players in active apparel, representing 43% of dollar sales, there is still room for growth; they account for an even larger portion of non-active sales (nearly 60%). ■ *Source: NPD*

India Expo Centre & Mart gets National Tourism Award for being “Best Standalone Convention Centre”

India Expo Centre & Mart, Greater Noida received an award for Best Standalone Convention Centre of India during the announcement of National Tourism Award by Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India. Hon'ble Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu was the Chief Guest of the National Tourism Awards 2017-18 held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on 27th September 2019. Special guest Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary General, United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) along with Shri Prahlad Singh Patel, Hon'ble Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism and Culture; Mr. Yogendra Tripathy, Secretary and



Smt. Meenakshi Sharma, Director General, Ministry of Tourism were also present. The award was held on the World Tourism Day amongst the presence of National and International fraternity of tourism sector. Mr. Rakesh Kumar, Chairman, IEML and Mr. Sudeep Sarcar, Chief Executive Officer, IEML, received the award. ■

US retailers ramp up imports ahead of new tariffs

Major retail container ports experienced a surge in traffic last month just ahead of the new tariffs that hit imports from China on 1st September 2019. According to the monthly Global Port Tracker report released by the National Retail Federation (NRF) and Hackett Associates, imports reached “unusually high numbers” and are expected to spike again before another round of tariffs takes effect in December. As the Trump administration has launched successive rounds of tariffs, retailers have routinely attempted to minimize the impact on consumers by bringing in as much merchandise as the new levies take effect, noted NRF VP for supply chain and customs policy Jonathan Gold.

New 15% tariffs on a wide range of consumer goods from China took effect at the beginning of this month and are scheduled to be expanded to additional goods on Dec. 15 – covering a total of about \$300 billion in imports – including finished home textiles from China that were not under earlier tariffs. In addition, 25% tariffs on \$250 billion worth of imports already imposed over the past year will increase to 30% on Oct 1, which impacts some rug

imports. U.S. ports covered by Global Port Tracker handled 1.96 million Twenty-Foot Equivalent Units (TEU) in July, the latest month for which after-the-fact numbers are available. That was up 9.1% from June and up 2.9% year-over-year. A TEU is one 20-foot-long cargo container or its equivalent.

Numbers were high again in August, which was estimated at 1.93 million TEU, up 1.8% year-over-year. September is forecast at 1.85 million, down 0.7% from last year; October at 1.92 million TEU, down 5.5%; November at 1.97 million TEU, up 8.8%, and December at 1.77 million TEU, down 9.8%. Likely driven by the new tariffs scheduled for December, November's 1.97 million TEU would be the highest monthly total since the record 2 billion TEU seen in October 2018. The first half of 2019 totaled 10.5 million TEU, up 2.1% over the first half of 2018, and 2019 is expected to see a new record of 21.9 million TEU. That would be up 0.7% from last year's previous record of 21.8 million TEU, which rose 6.2% over 2017. January 2020 is forecast at 1.81 million TEU, down 4.5% from January 2019. ■ Source: Home Textiles Today