

## Providing Analytical Sensibility for a Better Shopping Experience

Written by Administrator

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The growing popularity of e commerce platforms along with evolution of technology has changed the retail shopping patterns. Traditional shopping stores and marts are facing a challenge to innovate and offer valuable shopping experience to the end user and are looking at technology solutions like never before. With the consumer becoming smarter and more oriented, the retail market is at crossroads of their future roadmap.

Simply selling goods to the customer is no longer good enough. A successful retail company is one which can offer smart selling solutions increasing shopper's buying experience while getting adequate feedback to improve and generate better products and solutions. Shop Sense, a tech venture founded by Harsh Shah and Farooq Adam allow buyers to have an interactive shopping experience

### The Concept

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Shopsense is a pioneer company in India, offering an interactive shopping experience for retailers. "Our business model is primarily B2B where retailers can buy the Product-as-a-Service at a brand level for their stores" says Harsh Shah. With this, Shopsense has been able to arm retailers with a strong tool to fight the onslaught of the e-commerce websites. "Technologies we create bridge the gap between the ease and convenience of digital shopping and the touch and feel experience of physical shopping" he continues.

While Shopsense tools allow greater interactivity for the users to browse and check products and seek user opinion on their customized creations, it also helps companies to trace the behavioral patterns of the buyers. It thereby gives an edge to retailers by offering analytics to improve their business performance. The colors and designs that are being browsed the most can be shortlisted in case of an apparel store, helping further development and research. "We have data generated by all customer touch points to predict and analyse their store's performance and customer journey which in turn helps retailers to understand their customers' shopping behavior" explains Shah.

### The Technology

The team at Shopsense in order to fine tune their products have spent long hours tracing the behavior pattern of shoppers across various product streams. "We have products from touchscreens to phones to tablets depending on what suits a particular brand and retail format. We have a plug-and-play approach where our platform easily integrates with the existing technology infrastructure, be it POS or Inventory Systems or e-Commerce, making it a very simple installation" reveals Harsh.

"We identify what are the needs and problems of retailers and their customers before we offer them our products. So after doing our preliminary research we identify the void technology can fill, and on the basis of that we pitch the idea to retailers." he continues.

### Case Study

Diesel Stores was one of the first companies to have used the Shopsense module. Shopsense developed two products namely "Match' and 'React' for the company after their preliminary research identifying possible voids. Match was developed as an in store engagement platform

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allowing users to browse new products, new collections rather than being dependent on a sales personal. Match module also allows users to create their own fashion style by mixing and matching multiple products from the company product range. The users can then share their creation for reviews to their friends and family seeking feedback before buying the end product. Never before has such a high level of interactivity been used by retail outlets.

The React functionality is used to prop a particular item from the inventory providing all information engaging and educating the buyer. "It empowers customer sales executives to enhance productivity and sales" says Harsh. They are also creating the user experience and interaction for Future Group's Big Bazaar Direct initiative.

### Behind the Screen

The idea for Shopsense was born when Farooq and Harsh while working. "We were frustrated to hear the same garlic bread and choco-lava cake offer when all we wanted to do was reorder our standard pizza. Taking this problem and understanding how this affects people, not just buying pizzas but during their purchases in retail outlets of all shapes and sizes, we understood that this was a massive opportunity to use smart and interactive technology to make shopping fun and enjoyable" recalls Harsh.

Using their network, they spoke retail houses to understand and validate the problem they wanted to solve. In September 2012, Shopsense was founded as a company.

### Initial Challenges

"Interactive technologies have always been looked upon as campaign gimmicks to draw more footfalls into stores. Getting retailers to understand that, if smartly deployed, they have the power to be a great tool to boost sales and help engage customers is a real initial challenge" reveals Harsh. "Every new company working in a B2B model, especially ones founded by young entrepreneurs, face a huge challenge of convincing heads of brands to take a shot with you". In physical retail, the customer experience is very tightly controlled by the brand's VM guidelines and getting a pilot deployed at the right place with the right permissions was a great learning opportunity for the team.

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### **The team and Statistics**

The company is still in the development phase with little revenue. “We are a team of 13 engineers and designers. At the centre of all the products we create, is a group of highly motivated and passionate individuals. Our team consists of the engineers and designers from India’s premier universities including, but not limited to, IIT Bombay and BITS Pilani” says Harsh.

### **Future plans of expansions**

Currently, the team is focused on working with large retailers having stores across multiple formats to build traction. Achieving traction in the Indian market will allow them to confidently start looking at deployments in more developed markets. In October, Shopsense is demoing their products at Retail Pro’s Global Conference in Barcelona to an audience of global fashion and shoe retailers. On the products side, Shopsense is looking at building more flexibility that will allow it to be best suited to match the idiosyncrasies of particular brands. Shopsense has recently raised seed funding by Kae Capital, ( ngels under Powai Lake Ventures), and angel investor Jehaan Mehta.