CHAPTER 10: Recommendations and Suggestions

The Government should encourage setting up of modern large cash-and-carry outlets, which could supply not only to traditional stores but also to licensed hawkers at wholesale rates. The Government should make available credit at reasonable rates from banks and micro-credit institutions for expansion and modernization of traditional retailers.

The Government should take initiatives to convert all uncovered wet markets in a time-bound manner with emphasis on hygiene, convenience to shoppers, proper approach roads, entry, exits etc.

- It was also observed that when unappealing and unattractive gifts were offered by the stores, it tended to have a negative effect and the preferences of the customers tended to decrease. Hence the quality and the appeal of the gifts and the like should be kept attractive and interesting.

- Membership discounts can be offered to the customers on their subsequent purchases, thereby retaining customer loyalty which is an important asset in today’s competitive retail scenario.

- Another suggestion that came up during this research is that it is important that the design of the hypermarkets should be harmonizing and layout of products should be in a transitional flow. The products’ sections placed nearby should be complementary to each other.

It is strongly recommended that there should be more cash counters in hypermarkets. More often than not, visitors were seen and heard complaining about the lesser number of cash counters. Customers had to wait up-to 20 to 30 min in many cases and sometimes even more, for their turn to be attended to at the cash registers, which is a significantly high time in case of today’s highly competitive retail scenario, and the marketers just cannot afford to lose their customers on such a flimsy issue. Moreover, the attendants standing at these cash registers should also be trained to process the customers as quickly as possible, and also be trained to keep their calm and be
composite and polite when they face the extra rush in case of festivals seasons, weekends and the like.

Another thing which is recommended is that there should be free parking or special earmarked parking for regular / heavy customers. Such customers can be identified on the basis of their visits and special parking facilities be provided to them.

Retailers should tie up with their vendors and suppliers and ensure that they receive their merchandise directly from them, thus eliminating the middle men in the logistics chain, and increase their own margins, part of which can be passed on to the customers as well. They should collaborate with the manufacturers and special managers can be deputed to manage relationship with the manufacturers.

Retailers should go in for latest and up-to-date technology for increasing their store efficiencies. They should computerise the operations in their stores and outlets, deploy state-of-art techniques for inventory management, and employ the practice of bar-coding systems and data capture through point of sale terminals to reduce the service times and perk up their store management efficiencies. The retailers are strongly advised to install Management Information Systems (MIS) also, and if possible go in for latest techniques such as ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) software to enable them to keep accurate costing information, smooth material flow, and precise accountability and last but not the least, ensure sound profits.

The following are the recommendations from this research:

- A well-planned and implemented positioning strategy is critical for the success of a shopping mall. Hence a positioning strategy is a pre requisite before the beginning of development of a mall.

- Even though the supply of mall retail space is increasing every year in India, many malls are becoming unviable. Facing a similar situation in the U.S., the importance of mall positioning has been recognized within the shopping centre industry and industry leaders have been encouraging low performing malls to emulate. Hence, there is a need for developers in India to have a clear positioning strategy in place for malls in India.
• An image focused strategy leads to confusion in the minds of customers as it creates complexity because of too many focuses on different features and characteristics of the mall, leading to complexity in decision making. On the other hand, positioning based strategy gives a clear picture of mall to the shoppers and clearly identifies the advantages over the competition, which simplifies the decision making for the customers. A positioning based strategy is recommended over an image based strategy.

• The retailers would also benefit from mall positioning. They can identify the right mall which would suit their merchandise and target segments.

• To position a mall, the developer needs to identify the value proposition. For developing a value proposition, malls offer needs to provide a value by which the competition is not able to give.

• Mall managers also need to understand how the value will be delivered to the retailers or shoppers. (For examples, DLF Emporio had to try very hard to convince international brands to come and set up their shop in India).

• It is important to know that, even though all the malls carry shopping goods, entertainment and food, perception of the target population varies from mall to mall.

• Perception has taken a tilt towards the dominant component of the mall like entertainment, shopping or some other aspect. Mall developers need to take this into consideration before developing new malls.

• It can be noted that the consumer perception regarding the positioning of some of the malls is clear. However there are many malls which are perceived to be similar to each other leading to confusing amongst the shoppers. Among the 8 malls surveyed, 2 malls are cluttered at one place. Many of them are close to each other; the conclusion being drawn is that most of them are more or less perceived similarly. Hence new malls need to focus on differentiating themselves from the crowd.
• Though the number of malls is growing in India, many of them are not able to get tenants. This study therefore investigated whether positioning and satisfaction influence shopper’s behavioral intentions. The findings of the study indicate that positioning is a significant determinant of shopper satisfaction and shopper satisfaction influences patronage behavior.

• More specifically shoppers indicated overall satisfaction with the five dimensions of positioning examined in the study (price conscious, quality conscious, brand conscious, fashion and life style conscious, social ambience and novelty conscious). The relationships among mall positioning, satisfaction and patronage behavior revealed that satisfaction plays a direct role in enhancing shoppers’ patronage behavior. Therefore a developer needs to align the positioning constructs with the positioning of the mall.