Going omnichannel in style: Biba's digital strategy led to a phenomenal 300% revenue growth

Context - Making trend-setting ethnic wear accessible across the globe

Shimmering festive wear and breezy casual wear with designs inspired by rich flora and alluring colors, BIBA's collection has become the symbol of elegance, class and comfort. Founded in 1988, Biba's journey began in a humble boutique. Today it has grown to become India's most trusted women's ethnic wear brand setting the standard for stylish ethnic wear for women and children.

With a presence of over 285 stores in 120 cities, 400 touch points in multi-brand outlets and leading ecommerce platforms, the brand has been recognized as the 'Most Admired women's Indian wear brand' by retail associations and marketplaces.

With an annual business of more than Rs 600 crore, Biba is growing and creating a global impact by promoting Indian ethnic styles across its stores in Dubai and Canada and by offering international shipping.

When the Covid19 pandemic hit in early 2020, retail store sales were completely shut down. Consumers did 90% of their shopping in online channels, which kicked off a race for retailers to provide wholesome digital experiences. For Biba, sales were heavily impacted as 75% of its revenue came from its retail stores. While Biba had a brand website (www.biba.in), it could not power a wholesome customer experience with a poor visibility of stock present at the offline stores. Overall, Biba saw a dire need to create a synergy between online and offline channels to manage inventory and provide more choice/variety to customers.

A meaningful digital overhaul

Noticing its decline in its online foray, the leading ethnic brand aimed to understand the reasons behind the stagnant sales and tackle the difficult phase and find the opportunity to boost overall growth and use all available channels, customer insights, metrics that can ensure growth. An approach aimed at driving revenue growth and increasing market share required a revamp in technology,

merchandising, business operations and overall marketing. With 30+ years of experience, Biba faced a challenge that needed urgency and accuracy to get rolling, with a multi-level approach to:

- Deliver a personalized retail omnichannel experience
- Boost growth in online channels
- Deliver enhanced customer engagement

While looking for a fitting solution provider, the brand relied on Capillary Technologies' Anywhere Commerce+ to power its unique omnichannel strategy through a robust ecommerce model. The brand trusted Capillary's secure, scalable and fully customizable enterprise ecommerce platform to manage their online and offline channels.

Strategy – Synergizing the essence of offline and online

To retain its offline growth trend and boost online sales, Biba and Capillary built a comprehensive omnichannel strategy that explored and delivered overall brand growth and sales. Deploying Capillary's Anywhere Commerce+ suite to strengthen the direct to commerce route, the strategy was designed based on studying and ensuring the complete availability of product stock in each state in India. Biba focused on discovering innovative ways to reduce order delivery time and flexible shopping experiences by easing out the customer journey from purchase to delivery or return and refund.

Making fashion accessible across India

Biba's prime requirement was to reduce the turn-around time for delivery, ensuring that each order delivery reaches the customer as early as possible. To achieve this, Biba and Capillary designed an aggressive location-based marketing strategy using the nearest store location for customers. Through this, customers will be able to view products based on the stocks available in the state that they live in, therefore reducing the delivery turn-around time.

In order to accurately attract the target customers, Biba planned to advertise their products on commonly used social media and other online platforms. The

advertisements had to display specific products based on their interests and redirect the customers to the specific product page.

Merging stocks for a boundless collection

Before implementing the omnichannel strategy, the brand website was only displaying the products available at its warehouse. Later, by expanding the product availability, Biba envisaged a merger of the warehouse and the offline store inventory to ensure customers have access to more products while they shop online. Biba utilized Capillary's expertise to gather data and seamlessly sort the store inventories across the country.

Bringing the in-store feel to ecommerce

During the pandemic, online platforms had to be rigorously scaled up as consumers were looking for an accessible ecommerce experience. Therefore, Biba's website had a long way to go in providing a holistic digital customer experience by changing the look and feel and adding feature enhancements for a smoother journey from search to purchase to return to refund. The brand wanted to enhance these major functionalities on the website:

- Integrate a variety of e-wallets and payment options
- Adding help section and size change options on the checkout page
- Including an auto-suggest and auto-correct search on the homepage
- Enabling a recommendation widget to cross-sell products
- Providing a simple return process to customers
- Nudging customers during sales and including flexible offers

Overall, these functionalities aim to ease the customers' online experience and Capillary empowered Biba to effortlessly manage the end-to-end order lifecycle on the website.

Glamming up online marketplaces

Directly addressing Biba's need to go digital without compromising their offline success, Capillary proposed a strategy that enabled the brand to integrate with 6

online marketplaces and offline stores including Amazon Sellerflex, Tata Cliq, Nykaa, Ajio, and Paytm Mall. Through this extensive integration, Biba could get ahead of its competition, save money, improve search engine optimization, reach a wider audience and garner more international customers.

Activity – Dazzling wardrobes across channels

Styling up women with contemporary and chic must-haves, Biba delivered an innovative, data-driven omnichannel customer experience powered by Capillary's Anywhere Commerce+ platform. With its robust brand website, Biba unified its offline and online experiences to deliver unique and differentiated customer journeys. This enabled them to increase their profits despite any adverse retail scenarios and engage with customers closely wherever they shop.

Enabling customers to find apparel closer to home

Connecting customers to local product stocks was the key to reducing delivery times. To achieve this, Capillary designed a detailed inventory map that included 29 different locations representing each state in India. As customers add their pin code on the home page, the screen refreshes with new stocks that are only available close to the customers' location. Therefore, the delivery turnaround time was reduced to up to 1 day.

Enabling location-based marketing, Biba has used relevant tools like Facebook advertising, Google Display and Search network to target personalized communications, offers and marketing to customers based on their location.

A stunning statement with an updated inventory

Enabling the integration of the warehouse inventory with the inventories from the offline stores, Capillary played a major role in managing inventory flow between the vendors to smoothen the operations creating a single database. Capillary enabled the Biba website to display instantaneously updated parameters such as:

- Stock: The stocks were reconciled every day and the delta inventory was refreshed every 5 minutes

- Price: The prices of the products is constantly updated to maintain a uniform invoice structure across the stores, online and marketplaces
- Transactions: The data regarding the customers' cancellations, returns, refunds, and replacement stock were thoroughly integrated
- Customer Data: Customer data was gathered from their transactions to provide a better customer experience with loyalty points and relevant recommendations.

A fashionable makeover for Biba.in

Serving a digital-first customer requires a deep understanding of customer behavior and preferences. Based on Biba's existing customer data, the brand analyzed and narrowed down several changes that the website needed. Capillary enabled Biba in including the following features to upgrade the online experience:

Enhancing the online customer experience

The entire website was revamped to change the navigation to enhance the look, feel and user experience, including these essential features:

1) Size guides

Within every product page, a 'Get Assistance' option on size guide and a 'How to Measure' section has been added to help customers pick the right size and reduce dropouts from product details page. The tab explains the clothing measurement and how customers can measure themselves.

2) Customer review/rating

A feature to record customer feedback or product review was included where customers can also include jpeg images to explain their issues with products and orders.

3) Nudge and push features

Keeping customers updated on the latest sales and offers, banners and timers have been included on the home page or sale pages counting down limited sale offers.

4) Integrated payment options

At the checkout page, the website offers a wide range of payment options. For domestic checkouts, the integrated payment gateway powered by PayU was enabled to include payments via credit card, debit card, net banking, UPI and other mobile wallets. For international checkouts, the payment options were extended beyond PayPal.

5) Home delivery

When the desired product is unavailable at the offline store, Biba has developed an option where the customer can pay and place the order at an offline store which will then be delivered to their home.

6) Auto Suggest and Auto Correct

Auto Suggest and Auto Correct search was implemented in the home page to display the correct search results based on synonyms and correct spellings of the search entry.

7) Recommendation Engine

A highly personalized Recommendation Engine was included that displays customers' recently viewed and similar products. By studying the current site usage and previous browsing history of each customer, a recommendation engine can deliver relevant product recommendations. This data is collected in real-time, leading to instantly updated web pages and an increased basket size during checkout.

Easing returns and refunds

The online shopping journey for an apparel brand is incomplete without facilities for easy returns and refunds. Biba and Capillary have built a comprehensive module that instantly processes returns without a hassle for the customers for a seamless experience

- Automating return or exchange requests, where customers can place the return, receive refund and track the return or refund status
- Instantly refunding the amount once the returned product reached the warehouse
- Integrating PayU/PayPal APIs for extensive refunding options
- Notifying customers via sms and email on each step of their return status

Keep track of each transaction

While Biba's online channels were thoroughly upgraded and linked with its offline stores, it was crucial to set up a mechanism to track sales and other metrics to analyze and optimize campaigns for each channel and enhance the experience for customers from different countries. This was achieved through:

- A unique order ID that identifies the origin of a particular sale or transaction with UTM parameters
- A directory of URLs for each country to enhance the experience for international shoppers by customized currency, currency conversion, shipping & taxes

Establishing the Biba brand in the marketplace

Online marketplace integrations play a major role in a brand's ecommerce growth, Capillary helped set up Biba's presence in various marketplaces including - Amazon Sellerflex, Tata Cliq, Nykaa, Ajio, and Paytm Mall. Biba was linked with the ecommerce sellers to transfer real-time product data including the product price, description, image and quantity. As the transactions take place on the ecommerce platforms, Biba receives instant order details to keep track of the final sales.

Response - Inspiring designs, inspiring sales growth

Over the years, Biba's affordable and appealing clothing have undoubtedly become a household name. In the past two years even as the Covid19 pandemic shook the

apparel industry, Biba managed to swiftly conquer new digital frontiers and retain its position as a dominant player. The brand's collaboration with Capillary Technologies outshined other players with an ingenious omnichannel strategy, setting more than 300% revenue growth since the pandemic.

- **Increased orders:** Since the pandemic, the orders saw a massive increase by 320% due to multiple channels go-live
- **A significant reduction in costs:** By delivering products in the same state using the store's inventory, Biba was able to reduce the delivery cost by *40%*
- **Better Customer Experience**: The average delivery turnaround time has decreased from *50%*
- **More Inventory Visibility**: Customers are now able to view a lot more product options on the Biba website as it shows a cumulative inventory of both the stores and the brand warehouse. Overall the product inventory visibility has increased by **around 20%**
- **Reduced cost of holding inventory**: There has been a *20% increase in overall inventory* **sales** leading to reduction in the cost of holding inventory. Now, inventory has been split across stores where there are offline as well as online sales as customers have options to buy more. Therefore, *Biba was able to save around INR 1,600,000* through this model within 3 months
- The overall order value has increased by about 8%