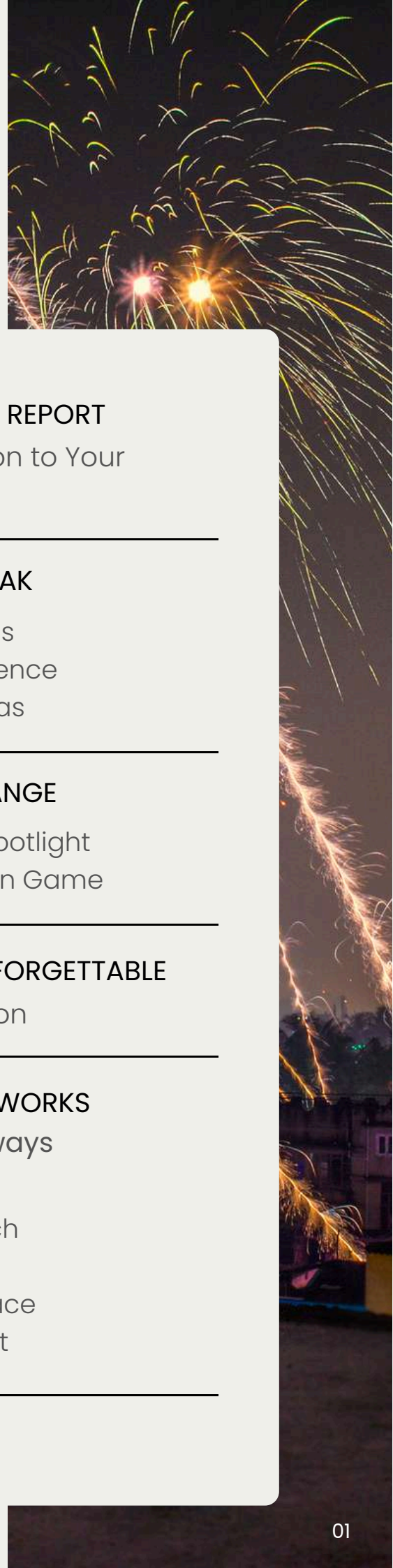


# RETAIL READINESS REPORT

GAPS TO CLOSE BEFORE DIWALI 2025



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# Retail Readiness Report:

## Gaps to Close Before Diwali 2025

Almost every festival across the world has two major aspects that play a vital role in their significance.

The first is the array of emotions that drive the celebrations. Happiness, joy, hope... all these emotions spark excitement and revelry whenever a festival comes up. The second can be best illustrated with an example:

### **Do you remember the thrill of festive shopping as a kid?**

Helping Mom with cleaning the house and choosing your new favourite dolls to put on the Golu display during Navaratri? Seeing Dad come home with new clothes for you just a couple of days before Dusshera? Getting excited over the sweet smell of motichoor laddu fresh from the mithai shop during Diwali evenings with your cousins?

It wasn't just about what you bought; it was the unforgettable feeling of the experience, and the memories made at that place.



Everyone seeks that same spark, that warmth, that festive atmosphere when they step into your store.





Shopping and the retail experience play a big role in adding to the sparkle of our festivals – adding to the fervor that differentiates daily retail experiences – even the ones associated with special occasions.

As Diwali approaches, it's time to make that special effort to create incredible moments for our customers. And it makes business sense too! Footfall is expected to increase by over 20% in major malls, resulting in a 10–12%<sup>1</sup> spike in festive sales value against last year. Clearly, the opportunity for sales is bigger than ever.



- 93.9%<sup>2</sup> of consumers from Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities in India make **purchases during festivals.**
- 43.7% of shoppers **spend between Rs. 5,000 and Rs. 10,000** during festivals and only 21.8% spend above Rs. 10,000.
- **Consumers are thinking about festivals months in advance**, with 47%<sup>3</sup> starting to think about Diwali before July and 78% before September.

<sup>1</sup> <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/retail/retailers-brands-see-5-10-on-year-growth-in-independence-period-sales/articleshow/112548807.cms1>

<sup>2</sup> [https://effulgence.rdiias.ac.in/user/article\\_pdf/Artical\\_vol23\\_1\\_49\\_60.pdf](https://effulgence.rdiias.ac.in/user/article_pdf/Artical_vol23_1_49_60.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.campaignindia.in/article/diwali-consumer-spending-set-to-grow-by-62-over-last-year/498086>

# Why Should You Pay More Attention to Your Store's Branding?

While it may seem that ecommerce is getting most of the eyeballs, it hasn't quite replaced the share of shopping at stores in customers' wallets.



Reports indicate that India's ecommerce sector registered a gross merchandise value (GMV) of about \$12–14 billion<sup>4</sup>, while retail sales (offline) during the same period were estimated at Rs. 4.25 trillion (about \$51 billion)<sup>5</sup>, demonstrating that traditional retail still commands roughly four times the market value of online commerce.

And if your store doesn't evoke that exciting, inviting experience that customers crave, your visibility could take a massive hit during Diwali.

So, keeping in mind the strong customer preference for physical shopping coupled with a rise in demand for experiential retail, the better question to ask right now is:

<sup>4</sup> <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/startups/festival-season-sales-set-to-touch-12-billion-this-year-report/articleshow/113466527.cms>

<sup>5</sup> <https://cfo.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/strategy-operations/indias-festive-sales-growth-halves-this-season-amid-mixed-demand-trends/114999681>





## Is Your In-Store Execution Keeping Pace with Customer Demands?

We conducted on-ground retail audits across key markets in Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities in India to reveal what's working, what's missing, and what needs urgent attention before the Diwali surge.

With the insights in this document, you'll be able to get your stores ready for Diwali in record time and give your customers an experience they'll never forget.



Spaces **That Speak**

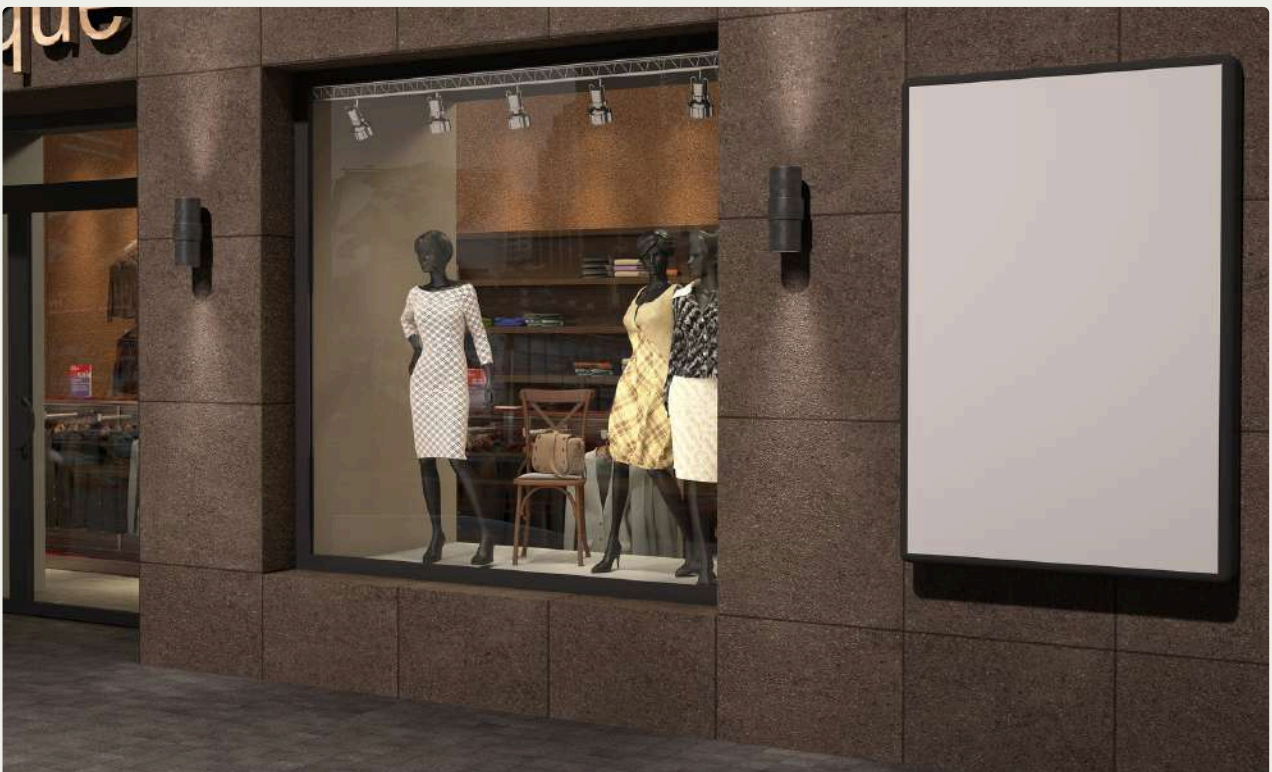
# First Impressions

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Our observations reveal a major gap in retail strategies, especially at the first touchpoints that bring customers in and keep them engaged. We found that the crucial first impression, often made by exterior branding, is frequently underdeveloped, leading to missed opportunities for attracting potential customers. Furthermore, the initial moments of in-store engagement are often underutilised, failing to capture the shopper's attention and drive conversions.

## What We Found

- Exterior branding is weak across a large chunk of stores across India — limited to single posters, no standees, or impactful touchpoints.





## How This Affects You:



- Fails to attract passersby.
- Reduces foot traffic resulting in missed conversion opportunities.

## How to Turn This Around:



- Implement strong, multi-dimensional exterior branding to act as a beacon, converting passersby to visitors.



## Spaces That Speak

# The Inner Ambience

In-store branding shows key gaps hurting engagement and sales. These observations highlight not only existing deficiencies but also present clear opportunities for improvement, ultimately affecting customer experience and business outcomes. We've identified key findings that outline these challenges, their direct implications for consumers and businesses, and actionable strategies to transform these areas for the better.

## What We Found

- Most stores' in-store branding lacks celebratory appeal and prominence.
- In a few of the stores, the visuals feature only images with no supporting copy.
- In a majority of the stores, there were no product information assets near products, leading to limited consumer education.



## How This Affects You:



- Fails to connect emotionally, store blends in, missed festive sales opportunities.
- Customer confusion, unanswered questions, reliance on staff, slowed decision-making.
- Customers remain uninformed and are forced to ask staff or leave for online research, resulting in purchase barriers.

## How to Turn This Around:



- Inject festive appeal for Diwali to create an inviting atmosphere, emotional connection, and boost sales.
- Combine visuals with clear copy for instant education, highlighting benefits and guiding interest.
- Provide accessible informational assets for self-education, increased confidence, and faster decisions.



Spaces That Speak

# Digital Dilemmas

Our review of in-store digital displays, especially laptop screensavers in exclusive and multi-brand outlets, reveals missed opportunities. These screens, meant to engage and inform, aren't performing as they should. Below, we outline the key issues, their impact on customer experience and brand image, and how to turn these displays into effective sales tools.

## What We Found

- In most of the exclusive and multi-brand outlet stores surveyed, laptop screensavers need better engagement and visual consistency.
- A majority of the current versions are vertical, and season offers are not legible.
- Most of the screensavers did not fit the screens properly.



## How This Affects You:



- Unprofessional look, missed promotions, customer frustration, and wasted digital real estate.
- Shoppers won't pause to engage, and key promotions will be completely missed, making the digital display effectively invisible.
- This signals a lack of attention to detail from the brand, which can translate into a perception of lower quality for the products themselves.

### Key Reflections:

From storefront to sale, every touchpoint matters. Weak exterior branding loses potential customers before they enter, bland interiors fail to inspire and broken digital displays waste precious engagement opportunities. When these foundational elements don't work together, the entire customer journey breaks down.

## How to Turn This Around:



- Use effective, legible, and perfectly fitted screensavers to act as silent, engaging salespeople.
- It allows the full message to be seen, prevents visual distractions, and maximises the impact of digital content, contributing to a seamless and trustworthy brand experience.



Unveiling the Range

# From Shelf to Spotlight

Our evaluation shows a clear gap between marketing promises and in-store reality. When products aren't available as advertised, it breaks customer trust, frustrates buyers, and weakens both marketing impact and brand credibility.

## What We Found

- While most stores' product ranges were highlighted externally, actual availability inside some of the stores was limited.



## How This Affects You:



- This creates a frustrating and confidence-eroding experience for the customer.
- This broken promise leads to disappointment, a feeling of being misled, and a significant drop-off in sales as customers leave to find the advertised product elsewhere (or from a competitor).

## How to Turn This Around:



- Regularly cross-check, verify, and ensure that in-store stocks regularly align with external promotions to prevent disappointment and streamline the customer's journey from discovery to purchase.
- It guarantees that marketing efforts translate directly into tangible sales opportunities.



Unveiling the Range

# The Presentation Game

Our review of in-store displays and digital engagement tools points to inconsistent execution that holds back the full potential of brand presentation. Though digital elements are widely deployed, uneven quality across locations leads to missed engagement opportunities and weakens the overall brand impression.

## What We Found

- Exclusive and digital brand displays are present in the majority of stores but could be optimised further.
- Info flyers with QR codes were better implemented in some stores than others.



## How This Affects You:



- Un-optimised displays (poor lighting, clutter, outdated content, limited interactivity) fail to showcase premium products or leverage digital power.
- Customers end up overlooking high-value items and missing unique selling points, diminishing display investment impact.
- Inconsistent QR code implementation means some customers get easy digital access to information while others don't.
- This creates uneven, frustrating experiences; tech-savvy customers feel unsupported, or the brand seems to be behind.

## Key Reflections:

When what's promoted outside doesn't align with what's available inside, it breaks the shopper's journey. Incomplete displays and missing information result in hesitation and drop-offs from customers at the point of sale.

## How to Turn This Around:



- Optimising these displays (better lighting, interactive elements, clear placement, updated content) ensures they stand out and communicate premium value, enhancing customer experience.
- Consistent, optimal QR code implementation across all stores provides uniform digital interaction, encourages deeper exploration, and boosts engagement and conversion.



Building the Unforgettable

# Crafting Distinction

Festive seasons spark intense brand competition — but the winners stand out with distinctive, memorable campaigns. By building a unique festive identity and keeping messaging consistent across touchpoints, brands can boost visibility, recall, and impact during peak shopping periods like Diwali.

## What We Found

- Brands that created unique festive campaign properties saw a boost in recall and visibility.
- Campaign naming and consistent branding across assets were found to be effective for an overwhelming majority of brands.



## How This Affects You:



- Without a unique, memorable campaign "property" (theme, character, motif), brands fail to stand out.
- Customers end up forgetting offers amidst the noise, diminishing recall and ROI.
- Inconsistent naming or branding (fonts, logos, colors, messages across touchpoints) confuses customers.
- This disjoints the campaign, diluting messaging and hindering recognition and brand building.

### Key Reflections:

Overall, festive marketing is often reduced to generic offers and disjointed branding. Without a clearly structured campaign and trained teams to deliver it, brands lose out on standing apart during Diwali.

## How to Turn This Around:



- An "ownable" campaign property cuts through the clutter, creates a unique festive identity, and leaves a lasting impression.
- It boosts recall, differentiates the brand, and builds emotional connection, driving engagement.
- Consistent naming and branding across all assets to ensure a unified, professional message that is easily recognisable and remembered, reinforcing identity, clarifying offers, building trust, and boosting campaign effectiveness.



## What Actually Works

# Strategic Takeaways

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Fixing the gaps is just the beginning. Standing out means showing up with purpose — and presence.

Here's what consistently moves the needle in festive retail campaigns:



## Make It Festive

Festivals like Diwali are sensory experiences. When your store embraces this with vibrant, consistent branding, it creates an immersive celebratory atmosphere. This integrated spirit makes your brand memorable, instantly recognisable, and a magnet for festive shoppers, directly boosting footfall.



## Simplify the Pitch

Decision fatigue hits hard during sales. For standalone stores, a single, clear offer cuts confusion, driving instant understanding and purchase. Larger, multi-brand spaces thrive with curated, value-packed bundles that cater to diverse customer needs while still offering clear choices. This tailored clarity ensures that customers easily grasp value and buy accordingly.



## Zone Smartly

Strategic zoning choreographs the customer's journey. Place "hero" products at entry to capture immediate attention. Position impulse items near checkout to capitalise on spontaneous buys. This intelligent flow guides customers, increasing the likeliness of add-on sales and conversion rates.



## Use Every Surface

In competitive festive retail, every inch is prime real estate. Go beyond traditional displays. Utilise screensavers, floor stickers, informative flyers, and branded uniforms for consistent messaging. This holistic approach maximises visibility and selling opportunities wherever a customer looks or moves.

## Train to Convert

The most brilliant visual merchandising needs human connection. Well-trained sales promoters are the crucial link. They can articulate offers, overcome objections, and personalise recommendations to meet each customer's needs. This human touch builds trust, converts window shoppers into buyers, and makes your visual efforts truly pay off.



# Need Ideas?

The upcoming **Diwali celebrations are a golden opportunity to truly shine**, but sometimes, finding that perfect campaign idea feels like searching for a needle in a haystack. What if you could get the perfect range of ideas designed to make your brand the talk of the town?

Explore our **Diwali Campaign Ideas** Guide for –



## **Simple creative concepts:**

Get fun, imaginative ideas that grab attention and resonate deeply with your audience.

## **High-impact, cost-effective visual merchandising:**

Learn how to turn your stores into vibrant, irresistible celebratory destinations without breaking the bank.

## **Store-level execution plans that actually work:**

Get practical, step-by-step blueprints for seamless implementation right where it matters most – on the ground in your stores.

Unlock Your Diwali Success Now!

[Click for Ideas!](#)





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