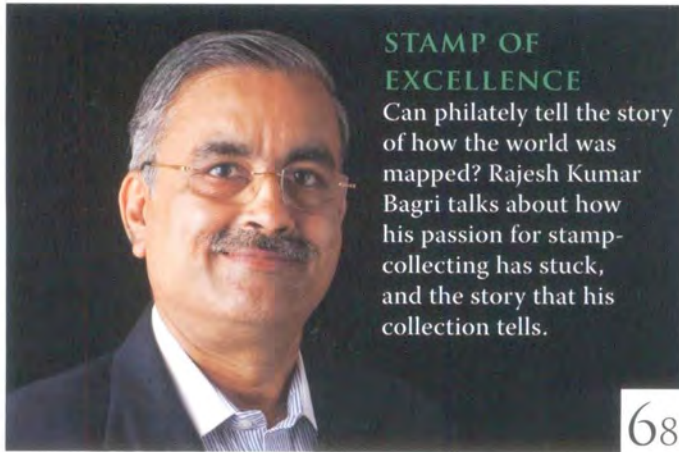




HUNGRY FOR GROWTH

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Is separating from a joint family the way to grow and thrive? Participants of the fifth Marwar Barclays Wealth Round Table Series have some interesting insights.



STAMP OF EXCELLENCE

Can philately tell the story of how the world was mapped? Rajesh Kumar Bagri talks about how his passion for stamp-collecting has stuck, and the story that his collection tells.

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ALMOST VINTAGE

A unique museum by Manjushree Technopack Ltd on the outskirts of Bangalore has packaging history on its shelves. Worth a visit to times when plastic didn't rule.

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BEAUTIFULLY BALANCED

Two friends pool resources and ideas to start an outlet that offers Kolkatans comfortable and stylish furniture for their living and work spaces.

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An old biscuit tin delights him. A worn-out Horlicks jar is guaranteed to give him a thrill. And the discovery of a clunky Coca Cola bottle from the 1950s, ah that is bliss. As one whose fortune is made from packaging, Kedia is passionately interested in the history of packaging, its evolution, the transformation in the materials used, and how packaging reflects a society's changing tastes.

Most people confine their passions to small collections. Since Kedia travels a lot as Managing Director of his family-run but publicly listed Manjushree Technopack Ltd, based in Bangalore, his collection of packaging grew in size until it began to overrun his house.

In 2003, he opened the Packaging Heritage Museum on the factory premises to showcase 500 boxes, jars, cans, and bottles which illustrate the journey of packaging from wood casing in the 1900s to metal, glass, paper, cardboard and finally to plastic which rules triumphant. (Unfortunately!)

Originally from Lakshmangarh near Bikaner, the Kedias migrated to Assam several generations ago. In the 1980s, Kedia decided that the opportunities for his flexible packaging business in Assam were limited and moved to Bangalore where he switched to rigid plastic manufacturing. Today, Manjushree Technopack makes PET bottles and PET pre-forms (moulded tubes that are blown into bottles) for almost all the leading FMCG companies, including Pepsi, Coca Cola, Nestle, Unilever, Bisleri (Parle) and Cadbury. The company recorded a turnover of Rs 150 crore the last financial year and is expected to hit Rs 225 crore for this financial year, riding on the recent expansion in equipment and capacity.

Almost vintage

A unique museum by Manjushree Technopack Ltd on the outskirts of Bangalore has packaging history on its display shelves. Worth a visit to times when plastic didn't rule.

Text: Amrit Dhillon



During their travels, Kedia and his sons Ankit and Rajat snapped up any piece of packaging that they saw in a home, shop or cart – an old Cadbury cocoa tin, a Marie biscuit tin, a 1961 Ronson hair dryer (so big and heavy that, in exaggeration, a woman had to tie it around her waist), old LP covers, perfume and whisky bottles, suitcases, Air India vanity cases, cameras, cigar boxes, the early Coke and Pepsi cans and bottles, or an Army hipflask. Also interesting was seeing the way logos and designs have evolved over the years.

"What this collection shows you is how the earlier heavy and solid packaging using tin and glass gave way to plastic containers with re-closable caps (you cannot re-close tin cans or carbonated glass bottles). As metal prices shot up and people realised that metal and glass were heavier to transport, the switch to plastic was phenomenal," says Ankit Kedia.

Since plastic is lighter, more plastic bottles could be loaded onto trucks and the big, heavy cartons needed for packing glass bottles could be replaced with lighter ones. The boxed razors show how manufacturers



packaged razors for women in a feminine manner, with red velvet and silk while for men it was a more businesslike black and white case. The early packaging of virtually every product bears little resemblance to its current look. In just two decades, the look and feel has undergone massive changes.

Alcohol thermometers in wooden cases look nothing like today's thermometers. Cameras have moved from being one monolithic piece of metal to being a combination of metal and plastic and then 100 per cent plastic. Cigarettes used to be packed in tin boxes because the metal foil we see

on packets today, which protects them from moisture, was not available.

It's hard to remember that baby feeding bottles used to be made of glass or that suitcases started off being made with a combination of paper and rexin; moved to wood, then metal and only finally to plastic. An interesting exception to the rule that every product's packaging looks different from its predecessors is the Lactogen tin of dried milk powder. And the Chanel No 5 box which has retained exactly the same logo and design.

Above: Manjushree Heritage Museum of Packaging.

Below: Agfa camera, Cadbury's tin boxes and old cigar boxes.





Above: Mr. Vimal Kedia, MD Manjushree Technopack Ltd.

“... from the time we brush our teeth in the morning to the time we go to bed, we use plastic 296 times in a day.”



“Some products such as perfumes continue to be packed in glass bottles. The use of plastic doesn’t work for some high-end items,” explains Ankit Kedia, who is standing in for his father while he is away on business.

A particularly quaint object is the bulky tiffin box where the bottom layer was meant for hot coals. “In the days when farmers worked far off in the fields, it was too difficult for the woman to reach them, so the farmers took the coal with them, lit it and put it in the bottom tiffin tray to reheat the food,” says Kedia.

The Coca Cola and Pepsi cans demonstrate how technology intervened to alter the look of these iconic cans. The earlier cans were made of three pieces. The top, the bottom and the tin part were welded together. Then technology made it possible to make a

seamless can from one mould, without any joints.

Plastic is undoubtedly the king of packaging. As Kedia points out, it has been said that from the time we brush our teeth in the morning to the time we go to bed, we use plastic 296 times in a day. But the big change ahead, he says, is the technology to make plastic bio-degradable.

“There are now additives available that can help plastic bio-degrade in three to four years when it is subjected to air or sunlight. This technology will address a lot of environmental issues on the disposal of plastic,” he says.

The Packaging Museum is fascinating but the objects only come alive when Vimal or Ankit are there to talk about their history and their significance. It does not work so well



Above and below right: Manjushree Heritage Museum of Packaging. Below left: Ankit and Rajat Kedia

if you walk in and look at the exhibits on your own. The Kedias prefer visitors to make appointments for this reason and also because the museum is located inside the factory.

One deterrent for visitors is the one hour drive outside Bangalore. If their plans work out, the Kedias are looking to move the museum to the city where it will be turned into a museum with trained staff to explain the exhibits.

As for Manjushree Technopack, it won the WorldStar award last year for

two of its designs. One was the Rhodes Peaches jar which is for storing fresh fruit. Tins are best for fruit but you cannot see the fruit inside. The Rhodes jar shows the fruit but also protects the food as effectively as metal against the effects of oxygen.

The other – the Quaker Oats jar of PepsiCo, the big, hour glass shaped container you currently see in grocery stores - won for its distinctive look. "We've been told that the jar led to higher sales," says Kedia.

This year, the company also won the IndiaStar award under two categories: the Cadbury's Bubbalo jar under the Consumer Packaging Design category and Del Monte's Twango/ Zingo and Unilever's Kissan Squeeze multilayer sauce bottles in the Food Packaging Design category.

Here's looking to more innovations that now also complement the beauty and peace of the environment. ☀️

