

## INSTORE VM

# Fuse - The Four-letter-word in VM



Jewellery retail in India is torn between two worlds. On one hand, it needs to be of traditional, ceremonial, ancestral legacy. On the other hand, with globalisation, it is also viewed as a lifestyle product. The design, therefore, needs to fuse the two looks in most cases."

**Bipratip Dhar**

Principal Architect, Epsilon

minimal window display.

Being located in Kolkata, the city of Joy, we have extensively worked with various leading jewellers of the city such as Sawansukha Jewellers, P C Chandra and Tanishq.

While designing stores of those highly acclaimed names, we haven't adhered to any particular school of thought. We have always experimented with various designs from different eras of architectural history to suit out clients' requirements. While designing jewellery store, we have experimented with a neo-classical theme so as to bring about the opulence and grandeur that is generally associated with expensive jewellery, whereas another floor in the same building bears a simple yet sophisticated look devoid of any visual theatrics, since it deals in jewellery of a different cost category.

All the jewellers whose names have been mentioned have mother stores that are based in urban hubs and many smaller stores based in sub-urban areas that have budget constraints and clientele belonging to various income groups. Stores located in urban areas with higher budgets and bigger spaces have more room for experimentation whereas stores located in sub urban areas are more minimal in nature. Likewise, a Tanishq store located in Ballygunge, Kolkata, spread over three floors, bears a much more opulent and grand look than the other smaller stores situated elsewhere.

Similarly, the P C Chandra showroom, located in Kolkata experiments with different ambiances at different levels. The upper level housing the diamond section bears an open smart and hip look enhanced with series of highly stylized images, the origami wall, impressive window display & the LED lit ceiling. The store strikes a perfect balance of aesthetics and functionality. The gold section, on the other hand, is more traditional in nature.

The concept of designing is to some extent different when it comes to

**V**isual merchandization is an integral part of any retail design. The fact has been established beyond doubt. However, it's good to see that the Jewellers have also finally realized that. Although clamour is increasing to project jewellery as a lifestyle product, one should not forget that the jewellery has and will always have ceremonial value and is mostly linked to a high end purchase.

Jewellery purchase is not about impulse buy. The consumer spends a good amount of time in the store

browsing and choosing products, sometimes accompanied by friends and relatives. Therefore, the entire experience beginning from the shop front or the entrance that leads one inside to the ambience conceptualized within - all form part of the entire VM experience.

With globalisation and the exposure to various brands across the world and categories, the Indian consumers' expectation has changed. People do not expect choc-a-bloc wall to wall displays any more, rather a more focussed and

Stores located in urban areas with higher budgets and bigger spaces  
- P C Chandra Store at Gariahat, Kolkata.



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A Tanishq store located in Ballygunge, Kolkata, spread over three floors, bears a much more opulent and grand look than the other smaller stores situated elsewhere.



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corporate players. Corporate players, unlike their counterparts, need to have a design imprint easily recognisable to their customers. Therefore, a lot of experimentation can be done on layouts, ceilings, flooring etc, but the overall look and feel including VM display remains constant.

However, all the projects have fair share of fun and challenge. Transforming difficult spaces with lower floor to ceiling heights, vague target clientele profile, traditional mindsets - all pose a challenge while designing.

Personally, I feel, jewellery retail in India is torn between two worlds. On one hand, it needs to be of traditional, ceremonial, ancestral legacy. On the other hand, with globalisation, it is also viewed as a lifestyle product at par with other international brands worldwide. The design, therefore, needs to blur differences and fuse the two looks in most cases.

The whole concept of VM is still in the evolution stage in India. Corporate retailers have recognised the need and have separate VM teams that work closely with the architects to carry



forward the theme within the store and outside. The individually owned jewellery stores are yet to shrug off their traditional mindset -especially in the eastern part of the country. Jewellers can learn a lot can from other lifestyle categories of high value. Most of the brands, much like their products, exude a sense of gentle luxury, fun and fantasy, youthful spirit depending on the kind of merchandise they have to offer. Helping stores build brand equity, distinguishing their design uniqueness, thus redefining store design are all inspiration for architects, designers and visual merchandisers.

In jewellery category, sight lines and illumination would play very important roles as far as the display is concerned. That is to make sure the display does not go above or below human eye level. Depending on the

available space the connectivity, flow and segregation between different zones within the store is very important, especially with the back office areas and administration that play a very important role in the smooth running of the shop.

Accentuated heights, clean crisp lines, intelligent choice of materials and a neat finish - The entire look and feel should not compete with the merchandise but rather highlight it.

*A Graduate from Sir J.J. College of Architecture, Mumbai, Bipratip Dhar founded Epsilon in 2000 and is the principal architect of the organization. He can be reached at 0-9831035880, 033 24130087, bipratip@epsilonarch.com, www.epsilonarch.com.*