

Unilever is transforming the way it does business

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The local FMCG company Unilever Bangladesh Ltd (UBL) is known for its wide brand portfolio, which includes brands such as Sunsilk, CloseUp, Lifebuoy and Dove. Recently, Unilever



has branched out by introducing a transformative change in its operations through the app Lever Bazar.

Lever Bazar is a business-to-business (B2B) self-ordering digital platform. It is marketed as an e-commerce solution through which retailers can easily place their orders without waiting for company representatives. Lever Bazar is intended to make the product ordering processes easier and more accessible for thousands of retailers from the most remote, rural and urban areas of the country.

According to Unilever, 80% of their business is in the retail market. Thus, Lever Bazar should provide to be an effective solution for remote retailers struggling to maintain business. Nahiyen Hye, Customer Development Excellence Head, Unilever, said, "When retailers used to place orders in the traditional way, they would receive their supply from a limited number of brands. Now, with the advent of technology, Lever Bazar democratises the retailers who get to pick and choose what they want."

Hye says that because of the accessibility and ease provided by this new app, retailers will be able to expand on their product knowledge, even if the retailers are located in remote rural and remote villages. "Retailers will also have the freedom to order whenever they want," added Hye, "In the traditional ordering process, retailers would have to order through the distributors. Depending on the outlet size, they would decide on the number of times they would send their people to retailers. With Lever Bazar, retailers will no longer have to wait or depend on an external ordering schedule."

One such retailer who has been benefitted is Md Faruk, a shopkeeper from Uttar Badda Kacha Bazar. "I highly appreciate that I am not dependent

on the sales representatives. If there is any product shortage, I can easily order through the app," said Faruk. He stated that the app has benefited his business, but added that next-day delivery options would have helped him a lot more rather than waiting for one or two days for each delivery.

Uzzal Mia, a small shopkeeper from a remote area in Kurigram, has a similar story. "I really needed an uninterrupted supply of Lifebuoy Handwash, as the demand for hygiene products skyrocketed during the recent lockdown. I was panic-stricken when our stock was almost running out and the sales representative couldn't visit us in that particular week due to the strict lockdown," said Uzzal Mia. He used to place his orders to the Distributor Sales Force (DSF). However, once he found out about Lever Bazar and its 'self on-boarding pack' feature, he has started using Lever Bazar for his product shipment ever since. The shopkeeper also added that the app can be translated into Bangla, which makes it much easier to use for those lacking proper English education.

Amit Saha, a shopkeeper from Tongi Bazar commented that he found the ordering process quite smooth. "I receive next-day delivery so long as I place my order by noontime. Alongside, availing the offers from the app has been beneficial in selling to my customers," said Saha.

Alongside the freedom to order anytime from anywhere, retailers can make more informed purchase decisions with this app. They can browse the products, read the product details in comprehensive Bangla and make informed decisions based on their customers' preferences. This helps local traders push products based on the consumers' needs, thus creating a micro e-commerce ecosystem.

Additionally, new product and offer alerts are sent to the retailers' phones, enabling shopkeepers to know all about Unilever launches and offers without having to interact with a salesperson. Retailers can check transaction histories to understand how much is spent on which category to track expenditure digitally. By providing sharper products and offering recommendations to the shopkeepers, Lever Bazar enables an easier ordering experience.

According to Unilever, the average daily order count of Lever Bazar stands at over 6,000. Unilever Bangladesh plans to stay vigilant, stay open to new adaptations and hopes to further empower local retailers all across the nation.

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