

'SOPs essential for hyper-local retailing' maintains retail consulting firm - YourRetailCoach

Hyper-localisation allows retailers to emerge as local brands and quickly build a connection with a highly specific base of local customers.

PUNE, MAHARASHTRA, INDIA, May 6, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- When this connection is built, there is no need for customers to distinguish between existing and new players and their focus shifts to value propositions. This helps new retail businesses blend in, counter competition, and capitalise on market position. In this communiqué, retail SOP consultants of YRC shed light on the significance of [SOP development and implementation](#) for and in hyper-local retailing in four distinct areas of strategic significance.



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Nikhil Agarwal

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To be recognised as a local brand is always a tough ask for retail brands coming from the outside. Even with the right strategies, it can take months of effort to achieve the goals

of branding. The same applies to achieving CX goals as well. Branding and CX might be broad subjects but whether a business is moving in the intended direction or not is affected by and reflected in routine business operations. There is no margin for error in business operations through which the branding and [CX strategies find implementation](#).

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) play a decisive role in keeping operations tied to the requirements of branding and CX goals. Consistency in operations across stores or departments helps maintain and strengthen brand image. Operational consistency also contributes directly to the value and experience delivered to customers. SOPs strengthen customer support and services by securing process standardisation combined with localised improvisations. Through SOPs, it is easier to implement the standards of customer service maintained by a brand universally as well as incorporate the contributions to customer experience and brand image. Because minute standards can be incorporated in SOPs, it makes SOPs a powerful tool to inject complex operational requirements mandated by CX and branding strategies.

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Every market has unique characteristics, constraints, and challenges. This has diverse implications for different [business processes and operations](#). To stay relevant to local market conditions, it becomes necessary to develop or customise operations planning. If operations are not aligned with local conditions, it will not only make achieving operational efficiency difficult but also make operations planning unfit for its environment. This does not augur well for hyper-local retailing. For example, in parts of the world, punctuality concerning work timings is taken seriously. Working before or beyond the scheduled work timings is not acceptable. There may even be regulations for this. By making room for such factors, business operations are aligned with the local environment. Companies cannot impose their global standards in local markets without making the necessary adjustments. Once a certain aspect of operations planning is improvised, it may also necessitate adjustments in other areas of business planning. Using the same example, if working hours are strict, shift-based working emerges as a possible alternative to running stores.

SOPs enable defining business processes with complex detailing required for localisation. Precision in process definitions brings improved operational efficiency saving time and resources. There is a higher degree of planned certainty in operations with SOPs serving as operational roadmaps for employees and managers. Confusion and duplication at work are avoided. The scope of errors and deviation from the operational standards is reduced with clarity of procedures and guidelines. On the broader picture, SOPs make it easier to align operations planning with local market environments leading to enhanced scope for achieving operational efficiency.

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Adherence to the law of the land is something fundamental to localisation. For example, a global retail brand with stores in other countries must stand in compliance not just with the national and state-level laws in those countries but also with the local rules and regulations where such stores are located. Failing to do so might mandate closing such stores that are on the wrong side of the law. This applies to local players as well since the law is the same for all. However, businesses coming from the outside need to be extra careful here because starting a store in

another country/state takes more effort and resources. They even might be subject to more stringent observation because of their brand stature and market position.

As regulatory compliance is unavoidable, it is important to have internal policies and systems towards ensuring that there is perpetual adherence to all the applicable rules and regulations. Having all the required compliance processes and activities in SOP format is extremely helpful. For starters, SOPs present a bird's eye view of what needs to be done. Two, SOPs help employees carry out compliance activities in a step-by-step manner giving them the scope to focus on each element and not missing any step. Since SOPs establish the standards of input, output, and performance, execution can be planned better. There is clarity of roles and accountability in processes.

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In most cases, inventory management is a subject matter of the local environment. Inventory management is affected by numerous local factors. Whether or not the suppliers and distributors with the desired capabilities are available is a local factor. Whether or not the required logistical solutions and public infrastructure are available is also a local factor. If there are appropriate warehousing solutions available is another local variable. These and many other local factors give shape to how retail businesses carry out their inventory management. After formulating the right strategies, the next important aspect is the execution of operations concerning inventory management.

SOPs are instrumental in localising business processes and operations. In inventory management, localised SOPs help in:

- Selection of suppliers, 3PL partners
- Finalising SLAs, deliverables
- Placing timely reorders
- Formats of ordering
- Tracking the movement of goods
- Collection of goods and issuance of receipts
- Conducting quality checks
- Goods return
- Making payments
- Payment of applicable taxes

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