

# *Internship Report on ACI Logistics Ltd. (Shwapno)*



*An insight into the retail industry:  
A case on Bangladesh*



Inspiring Excellence

## **Internship Report (BUS400)**

**On**

**“An insight into the retail industry: A case on Bangladesh”**



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**Date of Submission: 13<sup>th</sup> December 2018**

## ***Executive Summary***

This report aims to take a deeper look into the retail industry, particularly that of Bangladesh. To get a clearer idea, a case has been developed around Shwapno, the largest retail chain brand operating in the country.

Initially, the report gives a glimpse of the worldwide retail industry and shows how the retail culture came to develop itself in Bangladesh. Then it delves into Shwapno through a case that has been developed specifically around it.

The case sheds light on how Shwapno came to be the market leader in the retail landscape starting from its inception in 2008. It takes a look at its background and goes onto explain how it operates its two different business wings: brick and mortar and ecommerce.

It takes an informative look at all the challenges Shwapno has overcome to establish a strong foothold in the country and the problems it continues to face in present day. Additionally the initiatives Shwapno has been taking to make itself more efficient and remedy the problems they face have been highlighted here. It also focuses on how Shwapno envisions itself for the future and its future prospects in the country.

Shwapno, unlike many other traditional brands and companies in Bangladesh has a very dynamic environment, which is focuses tremendously on data analysis and innovative practices and greatly try to emulate the practices taken by worldwide giants who are very successful in their fields rather than just focusing narrowly in local knowledge.

## ***Letter of Transmittal***

13<sup>th</sup> December 2018

To:

Mr. Riyashad Ahmed

Assistant Professor

BRAC Business School

BRAC University

66 Mohakhali, Dhaka – 1212

Subject: Submission of Internship Report

Dear Sir,



It gives me tremendous joy to be able to submit this internship report on ACI Logistics Ltd. to you which has been prepared as a partial requirement for the fulfillment of the BBA program in BRAC University.

I have given my utter best in writing this report and developing the case I have included in the report. It has been an honor to work under your guidance and assistance in the preparation of this report. I am very grateful for the invaluable insights you have provided for this report, making it easier for me to write this paper in the best way possible.

I hope this report meets your expectations and you find it to be interesting and informative. For any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Natasha Ahmed

ID – 15104211

BRAC Business School

BRAC University



## ***Acknowledgement***

First and foremost, I would like to thank Almighty Allah for bestowing me with the ability to finish this internship report within the set time frame and within the best of my knowledge and abilities. I would like to express my gratitude towards my family as well for the love and support they always give me.

Undoubtedly, this report would not have come to proper completion without the help of various people. I would like to acknowledge their encouragement, support, guidance and supervision.

I would like to express my gratitude towards my internship advisor, Mr. Riyashad Ahmed, without whose unwavering support and guidance this report would not have been what it has come to now.

I had my internship in the PIDS (Process Innovation & Data Science) department of ACI Logistics Ltd. I would like to acknowledge their contribution as whole towards my report as without their cooperation and knowledge, I may not have been able to correctly put into light some of the segments of this report and gather the sufficient insight necessary to make this report come to fruition. I am thankful towards my internship supervisor, Ms. Bipasha Hossain, team leader of PIDS and all the other team members, part of the department.

In addition, I would also like to thank my friends, especially those who have studied alongside me in BRAC University. I appreciate all of the encouragement, support and assistance I have received from them which have helped me immensely throughout the internship period.

Lastly, I apologize if I have left any person out who has contributed towards this report in any way and has helped me throughout my internship at ACI Logistics Ltd.

**Table of Contents**

Executive Summary----- 2

Letter of Transmittal ----- 3

Acknowledgement ----- 5

Table of Contents ----- 6

1. Organizational overview of ACI Logistics Ltd.----- 8

2. Introduction to the Report:----- 9

2.1 Rationale of the study:----- 9

2.2 Statement of problems:----- 9

2.3 Scope and delimitation of the study:----- 9

2.4 Objectives of the report:----- 9

3. Internship at a glance:----- 11

4. Overview of the retail industry: ----- 12

4.1 What is retail? ----- 12

4.2 The retail industry: ----- 12

4.3 The retail industry of Bangladesh: ----- 13

5. Methodology: ----- 15

5.1 Nature of data ----- 15

5.2 Sources of data:----- 15

6.0 The Case----- 16

6.1 Abstract of the case: ----- 16

6.2 Introduction and background of Shwapno and its brick and mortar and  
ecommerce business: ----- 17

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 6.3 The key features of Shwapno's brick and mortar and ecommerce and the major differences between them: ----- | 20 |
| 6.4 The main challenges and problems faced by Shwapno: -----   | 22 |
| 6.41 Problems faced by brick and mortar: -----   | 22 |
| 6.42 Problems faced by ecommerce:-----   | 23 |
| 6.43 Problems faced by both ecommerce and brick and mortar: -----  | 25 |
| 6.5 Initiatives taken by Shwapno to face the challenges and resolve the problems: -----                        | 27 |
| 6.6 The future scope of Shwapno: -----   | 29 |
| 7. Conclusion-----   | 31 |
| 8. References -----  | 32 |





## ***1. Organizational overview of ACI Logistics Ltd.***

ACI Ltd. Is one of the biggest and most renowned conglomerates in present day Bangladesh with annual net sales of about 48 million BDT (as of 2016-2017 financial year). Its origin can be traced back to 1968, in the then East Pakistan (current day Bangladesh) where it was first formed as a subsidiary of Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI). Subsequently, it incorporated itself as ICI Bangladesh Manufacturers Ltd in 1973 before finally renaming itself as Advanced Chemical Industries Ltd (ACI Ltd) in 1992. ACI's Mission is to enrich the quality of life of people through responsible application of knowledge, technology and skills.

ACI Ltd currently operates four strategic business units: healthcare, consumer brands, and agribusiness and retail chain. Retail chain is where ACI Logistics Ltd. comes into the picture.

ACI Logistics Ltd. is a subsidiary company of ACI Ltd and is responsible for operating the leading retail chain in the country, Shwapno. It reaches the lives of more than 35000 households daily which goes to reiterate its image as the leading and largest retail chain in Bangladesh, with a market share of more than 45%. ACI Logistics entered into the Bangladeshi retail market in 2008 as “Fresh and Near” in order to make the company’s “Seed to Shelf” vision of connecting farmers directly with consumers come into reality. Shwapno currently operates across 63 outlets nationwide, spanning across Dhaka, Sylhet, Chittagong and Comilla. Shwapno’s vision is to positively impact the lives of many. It is a constant advocate for sustainability, environmental and health awareness and community wellbeing.

## ***2. Introduction to the Report:***

### ***2.1 Rationale of the study:***

This report aims to delve into the retail landscape, particularly focusing on Shwapno, the leading retail chain brand in the country of Bangladesh.

### ***2.2 Statement of problems:***

The report has been made to highlight the nature of the fast paced nature of the retail industry in which Shwapno operates. It will shed light on the two main business wings of Shwapno: the traditional physical stores, i.e. brick and mortar and ecommerce. Additionally, it will take a look at the problems and challenges Shwapno has faced in the past or continues to face now, the initiatives taken to resolve those issues and its future prospects.

### ***2.3 Scope and delimitation of the study:***

The report primarily focuses on the retail industry, especially that of Bangladesh by taking a closer look at the leading retail chain brand currently operating here which is Shwapno. The delimitations are the limited time allowed to collect the information and prepare this report and the confidentiality maintained by Shwapno when it comes to disclosing some information about them.

### ***2.4 Objectives of the report:***

- Showcase the nature of the retail landscape
- Highlight the rising potential of the retail industry in Bangladesh
- Give a detailed look at Shwapno, the market leader in Bangladesh's retail industry
- Show the two different business wings of Shwapno: brick and mortar and ecommerce

- Give an insight on the problems and challenges Shwapno has faced in the past or is facing now
- Highlight the initiatives taken by Shwapno to remedy some of their problems
- Give an overview of how Shwapno envisions itself in the future and its future prospects.



### ***3. Internship at a glance:***

I got the opportunity to have my internship at ACI Logistics Limited, a subsidiary of Advanced Chemical Industries Limited (ACI Ltd.) which operates the retail brand Shwapno for three months commencing from the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 2018. I was placed in the Process Innovation and Data Science department, known prominently as “PIDS” in the organization. This department mainly deals with bringing innovative practices in the operations of Shwapno, dealing with data analytics and the ecommerce website Shwapno.com.

My job responsibilities and duties consisted of:

- Categorizing customer complaints
- Tracking competitor’s assortments of the goods they offer
- Tracking competitor’s promotional offers daily
- Analyzing and making comparisons between Shwapno.com’s and competitor’s promotions
- Helping my department come up with counter strategies against competitors’ ones
- Collecting and organizing information regarding promotions

## **4. Overview of the retail industry:**

### **4.1 What is retail?**

The term 'retail' pertains to the sale of goods to ultimate consumers in comparatively small quantities for use or consumption rather than for resale. It is basically how producers of goods and services get their products to end consumers. Retailers often procure their goods directly from manufacturers, but other times, they may also get goods from wholesaler or distributors who work as a middleman between the retailer and the manufacturer or producer of the said goods. This may make it easier for distribution and marketing. Retailers are the final stop on the supply chain before products end up in the shopping carts of consumers. Retailing usually takes place in retail stores or service establishments but it may also happen through direct selling such as through vending machines, door-to-door sales or even electronic channels.

### **4.2 The retail industry:**

The existence of retail markets can be traced back to ancient times. Archaeological evidence of trade relating to barter systems can be dated back to about 10,000 years ago. Coinage replaced barter as civilizations continued to grow. There are extensive proofs of retailing existing in Medieval Europe and recent research also indicates that early retail systems existed in China.

The modern era of retail is classified as the time period from the industrial revolution to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. During the past couple of decades, the retail scene has gone through various small and big changes. For instance, made to order market for clothing which was the preferred choice amongst many has changed gradually to be mostly taken over by ready to wear markets. In some parts of the world such as developing or less developed nations, the retail business is dominated by smaller family-run or regionally-targeted stores. Developing nations continue to go through change as bigger

corporations continue to introduce big retail chains to the landscape such as Big Bazar in India. In the developed world, consisting of countries like the USA, the market is dominated by multinational conglomerates such as the Wal-Mart which not only performs well in their country of origin but continue to branch out to other countries where they see potential for growth and revenue such as Canada, China, Mexico, etc.

As digitization continues to occur and people's lives become more fast-paced, many companies are moving towards the ecommerce platform. Ecommerce is a growing industry and has great potential for even more growth in the future, as can be seen by the ecommerce giant Amazon's success.

#### ***4.3 The retail industry of Bangladesh:***

In the early 1990s, a "supermarket revolution" began in developing economies. Through this phenomenon these economies saw a rapid increase of modern retail stores specializing in food retailing to come into existence and replace traditional shops and wet markets.

Bangladesh became part of the global supermarket revolution in the early 2000s. This was caused by the changing socioeconomic trends in the country, increasing urbanization, more women entering the workforce and increasing income per capita.

The first supermarket or retail chain brand to enter the Bangladeshi market was Agora which was set up in 2001 by Rahimafrooz Superstores Limited. Then in the same year shortly after Agora's entrance, Nandan entered the market. Meena Bazaar first set up its outlet in 2002. Shwapno came into the scene in 2008 with the establishment of its first outlet (IDLC Finance Ltd, 2017).

Ecommerce is an emerging market in Bangladesh and is perceived to be a growing industry. This has encouraged many companies to enter the ecommerce market. The biggest ecommerce platforms in the country at present include Chaldal and Daraz.

However retail chain brands which used to operate traditional stores have also started entering this market. For Instance, Meena Bazaar introduced Meenaclick as its ecommerce website and Shwapno launched Shwapno.com.

The expanding retail market in the country has led to a robust investment in technology, supply chain and promotional procedures. The demand for supermarkets has been on a steady growth due the increasing middle income population. This has given local businesses confidence to venture into ecommerce as their global counterparts have done so in the past.

However, superstores struggle with expanding outside of the capital, as can be seen that they are mostly concentrated in Dhaka. It is also difficult for superstores to attract customers with a percentage of VAT (Value Added Tax), whereas the wet market does not charge any VAT on purchase.



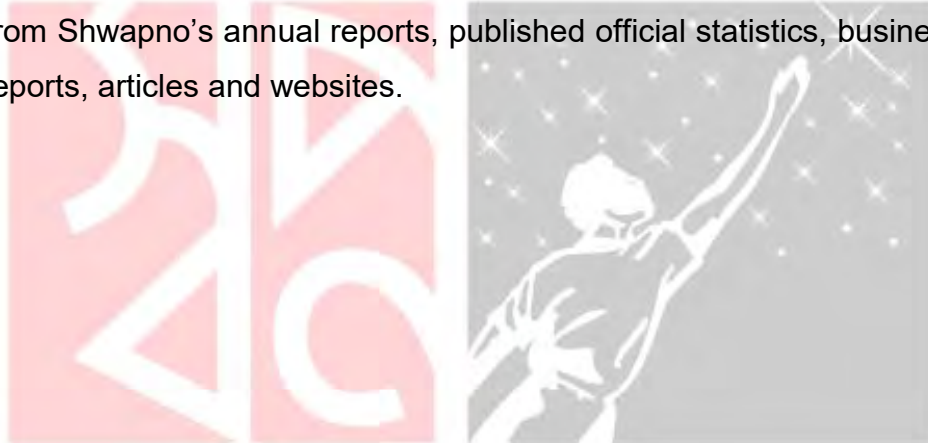
## **5. Methodology:**

### **5.1 Nature of data**

This paper is exploratory and descriptive in nature. Most of the data used is qualitative. A qualitative research method of a case study has been used for this paper.

### **5.2 Sources of data:**

The case study is predominantly based on primary data collected from discussions with various stakeholders of Shwapno but mostly with the various employees working there and handling there day to day operations. Some secondary data had also been collected from Shwapno's annual reports, published official statistics, business journals, research reports, articles and websites.





## **6.0 The Case**

### **6.1 Abstract of the case:**

This case seeks to take a deeper look into the perpetually growing retail industry with a special concentration on Bangladesh. To get a proper idea of how retail operates in Bangladesh, the case has been developed around Shwapno, the largest and leading retail chain brand in the country.

It sheds light on how Shwapno has evolved throughout the years since its start in 2008 and its present day situation. In addition, it explains how Shwapno operates its two different business models, brick and mortar and ecommerce. The problems and challenges Shwapno has faced in the past to get to its recent day position in the market and difficulties it faces now have been highlighted.

Furthermore, the case aims to showcase what initiatives Shwapno has taken to remedy its problems and make operations smoother and more profitable. We also get to have a glimpse of how Shwapno envisions itself for the future in keeping up with the dynamic environment and nature of retail.

## ***6.2 Introduction and background of Shwapno and its brick and mortar and ecommerce business:***

Shwapno is operated by ACI Logistics Ltd., a subsidiary company of Advanced Chemical Industries (ACI Ltd). Shwapno entered the retail market in Bangladesh in 2008 as “Fresh and Near” with an aim to fulfill the company’s vision of “Seed to Shelf” which would connect farmers directly with consumers in a superstore platform. Since its inception, Shwapno has managed to make a great name for itself and has become the largest retail chain brand in the country with having more than 60 outlets located throughout Bangladesh and being able to touch the lives of 35000 households daily. It is currently the market leader with a market share of over 45%.

Shwapno outlets started off with providing fresh produce and daily household essentials but now has branched itself into being able to offer a myriad of other products such as apparel, home décor, electronics and various other items. This includes a number of private labels for grocery, baked goods, etc as well as the in-house fashion label Shwapno life. Shwapno’s outlets span over Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet and Comilla. It operates in multiple outlet formats from small convenience stores to large megamall outlets which range from 1500 to 27000 sq ft. Shwapno is the market leader in the retail landscape of Bangladesh.

In the financial year of 2016-2017, Shwapno led rapid expansion, opening 12 outlets across Bangladesh, and springing towards other areas outside of the metropolitan ones (ACI Ltd, 2018). Consequently, there has been increase in sales and footfall growth. Footfall relates to the number of people entering a given place usually a shop or a shopping place at a given period of time. Shwapno has been focusing on improving customer satisfaction as well maintain price leadership in the market.

In 2016, Shwapno achieved the recognition as the top retail chain in Bangladesh by receiving the award for the best retail brand jointly given by Kantar Millward Brown and Bangladesh Brand Forum.

Shwapno has also been focusing on improving sustainability and to further cement this ideology, it has enrolled with Global G.A.P. which is the largest and the leading private sector body that addresses the critical objective of ensuring safe and sustainable agriculture all over the world.

In 2017, Shwapno launched the beta version of its ecommerce website known as Shwapno.com. It was done to keep up with both local and global trends. There is a growing demand for convenience in shopping. The future of retail is thought to be online as more and more people have become very comfortable with the use of technology especially through rapid increase in the use of smart phones and social media. Predecessors of Shwapno.com such as Chaldal.com and Daraz.com have paved the way for ecommerce in the country and their success has shown that ecommerce has a bright future in Bangladesh as well.

However Shwapno believes that only ecommerce is not the future, people are still likely to visit brick and mortar stores. So it believes that it needs to keep up with global trends and technologies and improve and change the experience customers get at physical stores. In the long term, Shwapno hopes to fulfill its dream of becoming an Omni channel retailer.

From its birth, Shwapno had the mindset to transform the way in which the mass consumer base in the country fulfills its daily needs, bringing modern retail into the lives of consumers that had for a long time relied primarily on wet markets and other unsafe and unhygienic traditional shopping channels. Shwapno not only focuses on ensuring the quality of the products it offers but has also been a massive supporter and advocate for healthy and clean living through launching numerous campaigns on food safety and nutrition to educate the people it serves. To make sure it carries only the freshest fruits, vegetables, fish and meat, ACI Logistics has developed an extensive network for sourcing with growers across the country. Hence today Shwapno is able to procure 65% of fresh produce directly from source.

Shwapno at the beginning focused on the price sensitive customer base, but after years of steady growth of its conventional retail and other channels, the company now

has grown to serve a diverse market covering many segments across the country. The Shwapno brand itself has advanced over this journey, and today it is shifting its focus from value to nurturing aspiration.

With approximately 600,000 registered customers, 2500 colleagues, and thousands of suppliers and growers, Shwapno has created a large footprint across the country. Shwapno continues to expand its primary and traditional retail operations, raising standards and customers' expectations, also exploring new frontiers such as ecommerce. With the vision it has set for itself, Shwapno hopes to become one of the largest businesses to operate in Bangladesh in the coming years.



### ***6.3 The key features of Shwapno's brick and mortar and ecommerce and the major differences between them:***

Shwapno initiated the operation of its physical stores, i.e. brick and mortar in 2008, about seven years after the initial introduction of the superstore concept in Bangladesh which was led by Agora that was set up by Rahimafrooz Superstores Limited in 2001. Shwapno hopes to change the retail scene in Bangladesh and it plans to do so by implementing world class technologies and practices in its stores in the near future. Shwapno.com in beta testing mode was launched in 2017 as Shwapno's ecommerce website.

What sets apart Shwapno's ecommerce from other websites operating in the country is that it operates using Shwapno's brick and mortar stores for carrying out its functions. For instance, other ecommerce channels use one big warehouse to store all their goods and orders are shipped individually from there and sent to their destinations no matter how far they might be. However, Shwapno.com does not maintain a big warehouse for storing goods. Instead, it uses a few of its own physical outlets and uses the inventory already stocked there and deliveries are made from those stores. Which store's products will be used for sending the delivery is decided based on the proximity of the destination to a particular store. This helps to cut down on delivery costs as fuel consumption is saved and also saves on delivery time. This also eliminates totally the need for renting and maintaining a warehouse, cutting down on overall overhead expenses. This is why Shwapno is able to offer delivery free of charge to its online customers, unlike others in the market.

Shwapno currently operates in two different business wings, ecommerce and brick and mortar. However there are some fundamental differences between them, making it essential for Shwapno to use different approaches in operating them.

The key differences between Shwapno's ecommerce and brick and mortar:

- Costs – E-business models tend to have lower overhead and startup costs in comparison to traditional business models of brick and mortar stores. Shwapno.com does not have the need for maintaining physical outlets which eliminates the need for location rent, staff and utilities. This helps to improve profitability. The brick and mortar model also needs to have an ecommerce presence although ecommerce models do not need to maintain a physical store presence. This means that web costs for development and marketing are not eliminated completely in traditional business models.
- Working hours – Whereas traditional stores operated by Shwapno can only be open for transactions during workings hours, Shwapno.com offers its customers 24/7 service, meaning that customers can order anytime they want allowing more flexibility.
- Processing – A chunk of transactions are processed manually in brick and mortar stores, where in contrast, in Shwapno.com there is automatic processing of transactions, which helps to cut down on the manpower needed and makes it easier to avoid human error.
- Interaction and convenience – In brick and mortar interaction between the business and the customer is direct, i.e. face to face, which means that you have to be physically present to make the purchase. In ecommerce, customers do not need to have direct interaction and can order from anywhere they may be. This saves time and is of more convenience.
- Marketing – In traditional commerce such as the physical stores operated by Shwapno, they use usually standardized or mass marketing to attract customers. In contrast, customization exists in ecommerce which often leads to one on one marketing
- Delivery – Delivery of products is almost immediate in brick and mortar stores whereas in ecommerce, delivery of goods is usually made after some time.
- Scope of business – The scope of a physical store is limited to the area and the nearby areas in which it serves or operates. Whereas ecommerce is not that limited to location and is able to reach wider areas and audiences and in some cases even worldwide due to its ease of access.

## **6.4 The main challenges and problems faced by Shwapno:**

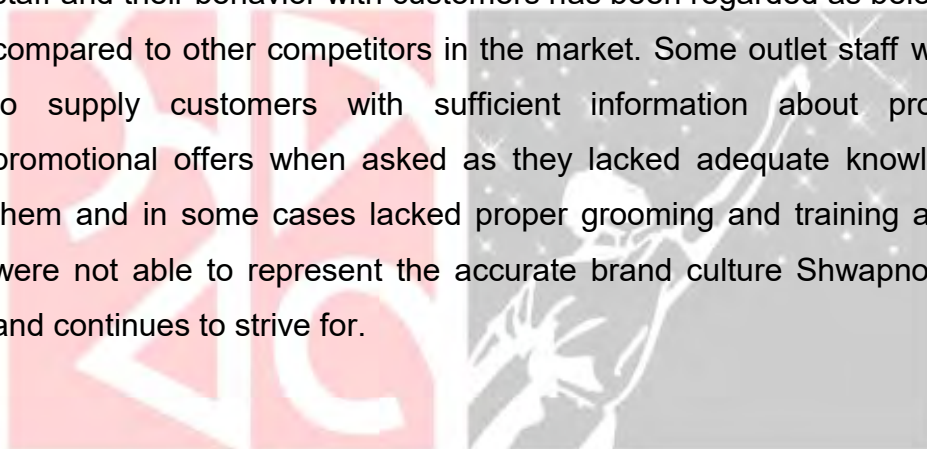
Shwapno is the biggest retail brand of Bangladesh and to achieve that title, it has had to go through many struggles. It still continues to do so as is typical for any business that hopes to establish its name in an industry which is ever changing and has cutthroat completion. Moreover, Shwapno conducts its business operations through two main channels, its physical stores, i.e. brick and mortar and its ecommerce website, which itself is a huge responsibility to uptake but is necessary as to keep up with changing trends and the dynamic culture of retail. Shwapno is a brand that hopes to make itself a name as an Omni channel retail brand in the future.

### **6.41 Problems faced by brick and mortar:**

- Customer Satisfaction - Perhaps one of the greatest problems Shwapno has faced in the past is inadequate customer satisfaction. Although Shwapno is a brand that associates itself with having utmost care for the satisfaction of a customer, its level of customer satisfaction often compared low when compared to its competitors like Meena Bazaar. Customer satisfaction is a measure of how products and services produced and/or supplied by a company meet or outweigh customer expectations. It is a key performance indicator within a business and is usually part of a Balanced Scorecard. In a competitive marketplace like the retail market of Bangladesh, where businesses have to compete for customers, customer satisfaction is recognized as a key differentiator and has increasingly become an imperative in making important business strategies.
- Mismatch between price and value offer of products - Although Shwapno is a retail chain brand that prides itself as being able to offer competitive or even lower prices in comparison to its competitors in the market and a brand that tries it utmost to offer the most for people's hard-earned money, there has

been much complaints from consumers stating that the prices of products were higher than those of the same products supplied by other retail chain brands in the country. Moreover there were additional complaints that often prices set for the products did not match the value proposition, meaning that the prices were way above the value to be derived from the products. Value proposition states to customers how a product aims to solve the customer's problem or improve their situation, what particular benefits it provides and also tells the customer why they should purchase from you and not from any other competitor.

- Staff service - Staff service in outlets has also been a source of discontent among consumers in Shwapno outlets. The service provided by the outlet staff and their behavior with customers has been regarded as below par when compared to other competitors in the market. Some outlet staff was not able to supply customers with sufficient information about products and promotional offers when asked as they lacked adequate knowledge about them and in some cases lacked proper grooming and training and as such were not able to represent the accurate brand culture Shwapno represents and continues to strive for.



#### ***6.42 Problems faced by ecommerce:***

Being only a little more than a year old, it is quite expected that Shwapno's ecommerce will have to go through struggles in order to establish for itself a strong foundation in the retail scenario.

- Less popularity in comparison to some other ecommerce websites in Bangladesh - One of the main difficulties Shwapno ecommerce faces is being relatively less popular than other ecommerce platforms operating in the country like Chaldal or Daraz. As a retail chain brand for physical stores,



Shwapno is undoubtedly one of the most popular names in the country as it has the biggest market share for retail chain brands. However, in the online platform, Shwapno has yet to achieve that. It faces challenges to being able to generate sufficient or targeted traffic for its website, converting shoppers to paying customers and retaining them so that they come back and purchase again and again.

- Miscommunication between the website and the business - Sometimes the problem of ineffective communication or miscommunication between the website and the business during order processing takes place. This makes it difficult to dispatch to customers their correct orders and sometimes may also lead to late delivery. There are also operational issues related to delivery of products for instance, only part of a customer's order may be sent to their homes, etc. There are also problems with insufficient stock at times which leads to not being able to fulfill customer's orders on time.
- Operational difficulties of the website - Possibly, the most prominent hindrance towards achieving better performance in the ecommerce platform has been the operational efficiency of the website and the experience it provides to its users. Many customers continue to encounter slow loading of the website and it often taking too much time to process those orders during checkout. This sometimes leads to customers getting frustrated and switching to other ecommerce platforms for their purchases.
- Product assortment - Assortment of products of an ecommerce website plays an essential role in attracting and retaining consumers. Assortment refers to the length or number of products a business provides; its breadth or number of product lines that are available to be bought from a business; its depth or the number of varieties available within a particular product line; its consistency or how those products relate to each other in a retail environment. As Shwapno's ecommerce is relatively new, its assortment is not as extensive when compared to its customers. Additionally, it has yet to introduce new product categories in its website as some product categories

are still not available in Shwapno's ecommerce but available in other ecommerce platforms operating in Bangladesh.

- Delivery inconsistencies – Sometimes although a product may be shown as being available in stock for purchase in the website, they may be in reality out of stock. Although people may order them, they will likely be called by the Shwapno.com that those products are not available and so cannot be delivered. There are also times where delivery is has delays. A customer may be told that they would receive the products they ordered at a certain time, but the goods actually reaching them several hours later.

#### ***6.43 Problems faced by both ecommerce and brick and mortar:***

There are some issues which both the brick & mortar and ecommerce channels have to face.

- Promotions and forecasting - One of the biggest challenges Shwapno faces is deciding on its product promotions. To attract customer's attention and let them know in the easiest and fastest way possible, the layout and placement of those promotions are important both in brick & mortar and ecommerce platforms. Forecasting has to be done to decide on what products to be promoted in what platform, when they need to promoted, what prices should be set, among various other things. This forecasting has to be done well ahead of time to be able to offer customers the right deals alongside and sometimes even before other competitors can. This is important as deciding what products to offer and what prices to sell them at directly affects sales and profits. Forecasting may be wrong at times, leading to incorrect, under or over estimates. For the forecasting to be error free, which in itself is a hard goal to achieve, experience and prior knowledge of any upcoming events, knowledge about customer tastes and competitor actions are needed.

- Insufficient data management - Although Shwapno has been in the retail field since 2008, it has failed to keep data about some aspects of its business. In some cases although information was kept, they were not maintained regularly or lacked proper structure and arrangement. For example, Shwapno did not store detailed information and maintain a database of its employees especially the ones working in the physical outlets from its inception. This makes it difficult to track employee behavior and performance.

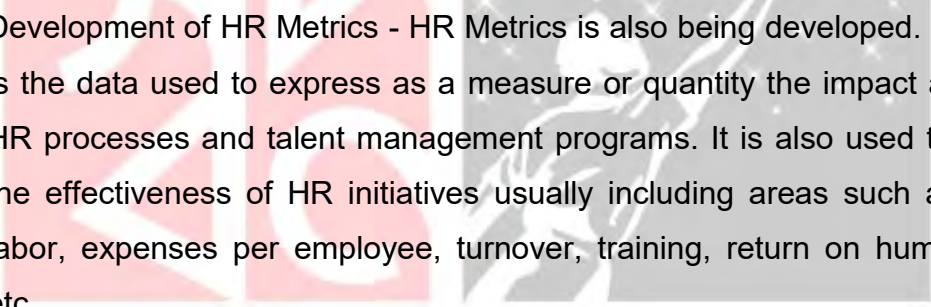


## ***6.5 Initiatives taken by Shwapno to face the challenges and resolve the problems:***

To improve its performance and overcome its deficiencies, Shwapno has taken various initiatives to improve itself.

- Better tracking of competitors - Shwapno being the market leader in the retail market is well aware of the fierce and intense competition it faces in the marketplace and so has started to keep better tracking of its competitors. Technology is being introduced to expedite the process and make it as error free as possible. This helps to set better prices for its products and to also understand what product to promote and when. Furthermore, it assists in learning of the strengths and weaknesses of other retail brands in the market. The information collected can be used as an advantage when the necessary situation comes to rise.
- Use of better technology - Newer and better technology is being planned to be introduced to quicken people's work processes and analyses. An analytics team has been set up who work purely with data. They are responsible for collecting data and analyzing them to get deeper insight into consumer tastes and buying behavior, market trends and competitor's strategies and tactics.
- Training of outlet employees - Outlet employees are now being given more and better training to make their interactions with customers more pleasant. They are also now advised and taught to learn more about the products in the store and keep clear knowledge about the promotions they are having.
- Introduction of HRMS - HRMS has been introduced to keep a better database of employees. HRMS (Human Resources Management System) is a software

application which integrates many human resources functions such as benefits administration, payroll, recruiting, training, performance analysis and review into one whole system. Handling routine HR tasks becomes easier with HRMS. It reduces paperwork and saves time. KPIs such as absenteeism, duration in the position, employee retention can be tracked easily. It helps to manage employees efficiently by monitoring training management, payroll, performance management and hiring. Additionally it helps to eliminate human error and provides data security and privacy. Organizations that use HRMS have seen that through the implementation of HRMS, there have been increases and improvements in employee self-service, collaboration between employees, management workflow, availability of information and predictive analytics among many other things.

- 
- Development of HR Metrics - HR Metrics is also being developed. HR metrics is the data used to express as a measure or quantity the impact and cost of HR processes and talent management programs. It is also used to measure the effectiveness of HR initiatives usually including areas such as costs of labor, expenses per employee, turnover, training, return on human capital, etc.
  - Shift to a new platform for ecommerce – Shwapno hopes to shift from its current platform for ecommerce to an American one which will help the website to become faster and get rid of a significant portion of its website's operational deficiencies. It is also like to assist in reaching a wider audience and make the whole ecommerce experience of Shwapno.com smoother, faster and easier for customers.

## **6.6 The future scope of Shwapno:**

Shwapno breeds a culture that encourages its people to be dynamic, perpetually active and innovative and up to date with the latest trends in the market. Following the global trend, Shwapno believes that Bangladesh will also soon shift more towards online retail and to cope up with that it has launched its ecommerce website. Shwapno hopes to make it easier and more accessible for customers their ecommerce platform and make the shift from a primarily brick & mortar retail brand to an online one and then to an omnichannel retailer. Omni-channel is a multichannel approach to sales that aims to deliver to customers a seamless shopping experience whether they are shopping online from a desktop or mobile device, by telephone or in a brick & mortar store.

It's long since the day when data analysis was an option, not a necessity. Since the emergence of the internet age, the growth of data has increased at an exponential rate. With such a rapid expansion in data creation, there are more opportunities than ever to gain meaningful and actionable insight into consumer trends through careful analysis. Shwapno hopes to use more data and technology to analyze trends and predict trends beforehand. It plans to use big data in the future to create better insight to consumer patterns.

Shwapno hopes to reach even more areas in the country as it can in the form of outlets or franchised stores which are known as express outlets so that people all over the country can have the experience of shopping from a retail store rather than the traditional wet market which is the most prevalent method of shopping among Bangladeshis. It plans to branch out to other areas of the country where it has not yet stepped foot in. It has numerous outlets and operations in Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet and Comilla and in the near future more areas will be a part of its coverage.

In keeping up with global trends and following in the footsteps of international retail giants, Shwapno plans to make its processes more automated to cut down on costs, reduce human error and human dependency and quicken all processes. It also hopes to

introduce world class technologies such as artificial intelligence, augmented reality, virtual reality, etc to enhance customer experience and improve efficiency.



## **7. Conclusion**

Shwapno is a brand that cultivates a culture of being dynamic in the workplace. It has a very fast paced environment as is typical of most retail businesses. Unlike many others in the market, Shwapno prides itself in being forward thinking and refusing to be stagnant.

Shwapno does not only focus on the present, but likes to think forward as well. Although being a local business, it has been trying to emulate world class technologies and practices in its business, which is truly one of the factors that set it apart from its counterparts in the market.

Although faced with challenges, Shwapno has been working tirelessly to overcome them and set an exemplary image of itself in the retail landscape and hopes to be one of the biggest businesses in Bangladesh in the near future.

Not only Shwapno, but the retail industry of Bangladesh as a whole is growing and it looks promising for the future.





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