

‘Online and offline retail set to share a symbiotic relationship’

• Staff Reporter



Future Group joint MD Rakesh Biyani and Srikanth Sundararajan, an investor with Helion Venture Partners, during an interactive session ‘Bricks & Clicks’ in the city on Tuesday.— Photo: K.V.S. Giri

Touch-and-feel factor of brick and mortar stores has not waned: Rakesh Biyani of Future Group

Future of offline retail business may hinge upon how much leverage the players would take of the online opportunity, and the future of online retailing would depend on how quick the market consolidation would happen and the companies could manage a break-even without compromising on the USP of their business.

While seeming to assure that the online retail has not reached such a level still as to displace the “touch and feel” factor of the retail chain stores, Rakesh Biyani, the Joint Managing Director of the Future Group admitted that an ‘omni channel’ which could integrate online retail with that of offline is the need of the hour towards optimising the consumer experience in the times of online shopping.

However, this would be possible only with investment flow through the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) route, or else, the cost dynamics would not work favourably, he observed while addressing the members of FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO) at an interactive session ‘Bricks & Clicks’ here on Tuesday.

In India, consumption is community driven and changes frequently, thus forcing the retail chain group to make tremendous efforts to understand communities, he explained, while taking the audience through the success of the Future Group.

Mr. Biyani and his interlocutor Srikanth Sundararajan representing Helion Venture Partners agreed that the online retailing has a market of only 11 billion USD in India, and all companies including Amazon are yet to make any profit.

Even in USA where the online retailing is at its peak, 92 per cent of the retail business is done through stores, Mr. Biyani pointed out, while Dr. Sundararajan predicted that in a year or two lot many changes would be visible in management of online retail businesses. Rather than being rivals, the online and offline channels are going to be sharing a symbiotic relationship, he said. The session was moderated by Manish Chheda, Co-Founder and MD of Auctus Advisors Pvt. Ltd.