

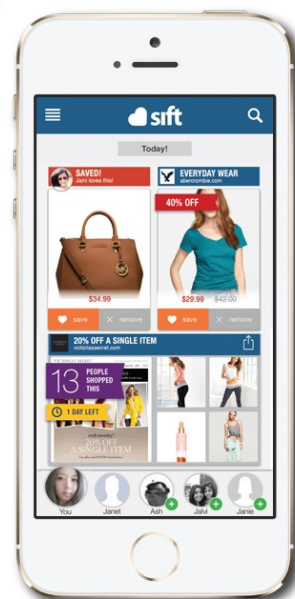


WHAT'S TRENDING 



**SAURIN
SHAH, CEO**

THE
M-COMMERCE
PRICE BROWSING &
SHOPPING APP
THAT ALLOWS
CONSUMERS TO
INTERFACE DIRECTLY
WITH THEIR
FAVORITE BRANDS
AND RETAILERS
THROUGH
INDIVIDUALIZED
PROMOTIONS.



Q&A: WHAT'S TRENDING  WITH SAURIN SHAH, CO-FOUNDER & CEO



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This is our inaugural interview with the people and companies trending in our universe.

This week we had the distinct pleasure of interviewing Saurin Shah, Co-Founder and CEO of Sift, an m-commerce price browsing and shopping app that allows consumers to interface directly with their favorite brands and retailers through individualized promotions. We have personally used this tool and found it to be off-the-charts phenomenal! Sift literally “sifts” through millions of offers and sends personalized alerts from over 2,000 retailers to create a one-stop shopping experience filtered by the customer’s preferences. This allows shoppers to avoid adding multiple store apps to their phone or tablet to track promotions.

Q: Sift seems like one of those amazingly obvious ideas that consumers and retailers alike would quickly come to love. How did you identify this white space in the market, and what is the value proposition you bring to the customer?

The inception was simple. I noticed my wife’s online browsing and shopping habits. She would browse the front page of the websites of her favorite stores almost daily. After work, she would often go through the day’s email promotions. Online shopping was a form of entertainment for her. When I asked her why she didn’t just get her favorite store apps on her phone, she replied, “I don’t want to have 20 or 30 shopping apps.” This is a complaint we hear from a lot of people—there are just too many apps.

This conversation showed me the need for a one-stop shopping app that would individualize promo alerts directly to the consumer. Sift was founded in late 2012 and launched on the iPhone in November 2013.

Because I come from a gaming background I tend to view the functionality of new apps the way I view mobile games—what will make the user want to return to the Sift app? I have also carefully observed the transition from online gaming to mobile gaming. One of the first real problems that had to be addressed was that of platforms.

*People don’t have 20 different consoles at home to play 20 different video games, they have one.
In the same way, 20 different shopping apps on a phone IS NOT what the consumer wants.*

I identified my wife as a shopper with strong brand loyalties who would rather look at 20 browsers on her desktop than download 20 apps on her phone. This was the challenge I took on—how could I translate the idea behind one-console gaming to one-app shopping?

Q: Part of what makes Sift unique is its proprietary algorithm used to sort through emails for loyalty programs and promotions that a customer has previously signed up for. How did this transpire?

Email is the most widely used messaging platform and marketing channel directly between the business and the customer. The bulk of these emails are marketing materials—coupons, sales, promos, and new arrivals. Many people might be surprised to discover that the average consumer subscribes to 30+ store emails and receives between 20 and 30 shopping emails every day. This has caused an overabundance of messages pushed to consumers. If there are too many messages on a daily basis, the consumer will start to ignore them all. This form of marketing is no longer effective and doesn't translate well to mobile devices.

We sought to solve one problem—make it easier for stores to connect to customers on their mobile devices.

So we took the idea behind shopping emails and delivered it as a native experience around a mobile customer.

Q: How many emails does Sift sort through?

Our proprietary algorithm sorts through over 150,000 shopping emails each day, over 20 million over the last eighteen months.

Q: What's your competition?

There are other apps, such as coupon apps, that provide similar services. We don't identify Sift as a coupon app because we combine design, brand offerings and brand promotions. We like to think of Sift as a virtual storefront window for browsers.

Currently our business is fashion-focused but our platform can support other retail categories such as drugstores and megastores, and we do see that as a future business opportunity.

Q: Do you have exclusive relationships and/or strategic alliances with specific retailers, websites and social media?

Sift supports over 2,000 retailers, and is currently forming strategic alliances with major retailers and service companies. Sift is in the middle of an iBeacon rollout with one of America's largest and oldest retailers and direct CRM integration with another. If you can send an email, you can have a mobile presence with Sift.

Q: How does Sift interact with location-based services?

Because location-based services can sometimes exacerbate the very real problem of app fatigue, our collaboration with businesses offers a more native solution.

We support shoppers no matter where they shop: online or in-store.

We recognize our value to both consumer and business alike. People want to know when their favorite brands and retailers are promoting and what items are new. They just want it in a way that is personalized and doesn't overwhelm them with notifications.

For the retailer, we have a fingerprint of the customer across stores and categories, and this information can be used to better anticipate and service customers' needs.

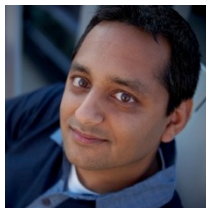
Q: What do you think is the most significant thing happening in tech right now and how do you see it influencing the future of the consumer?

I think the greatest factor affecting the purchasing patterns of the consumer is that people now regularly use their phones for things other than playing games and talking to friends. iBeacons, GPS and location-based data are more common place and the customer is no longer just shopping online. Through iBeacon in-store marketing, Sift facilitates a personalized digital storefront based on the context of the user – including their location in the store. The customer has become very omni-channel and this makes the phone the most important platform to us because it is the one true omni-channel device.

Q: Where do you see Sift this time next year?

Sift will continue growing its platform for the benefit of the mobile customer. From a services perspective, we will foster relationships with brands and businesses to facilitate direct interaction with their consumer. As mobile payment technologies mature, we will be able to integrate them into our iBeacon storefronts.

Our goal is to help retailers increase omni-channel engagement with mobile shoppers by leveraging personalization and our cross-merchants analytics.



Saurin is a serial entrepreneur whose first tech start-up Digital Rhythms—one of the first web-based social networks connecting musicians to fans—was built while he was still in high school.

Before founding Sift, Saurin served as Vice President, Social Games at Digital Chocolate, where he helped launch multiple top performing iPhone and Facebook games. He was instrumental in growing Digital Chocolate's social game business end-to-end, owning the mobile social game business while also being responsible for game studio management, and analytics infrastructure development. Saurin played key product roles at Gaia Interactive, a teen social network and virtual world giant, and at PlayFirst, the publishers of Diner Dash, one of the top-selling downloadable games of all-time.

Saurin's web technology background and deep consumer product experience drive his ability to build leading consumer-facing social and entertainment products.

Saurin received his MBA from the University of Texas at Austin.