

Business Standard

Lifestyle photo products : Fast forward

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All those who fancy seeing their pictures on glossy posters, flyers or calendars can now order one online, with prices starting at just Rs 199. Or, the next time you walk into the nearest retail store, you can order one family canvas portrait for Rs 899.

Affordable and customised gifting options, provided by Snapfish, Kodak Easy Share, iTasveer and Photoswift are finding millions of buyers even in a tough economy. Hewlett-Packard's (HP) Snapfish, a popular online photo service, which provides lifestyle photo products including wide-format collage posters, photobooks, desktop calendars, greeting cards, professional photo printing, is looking to extend its reach offline to deliver personalised gifts.

"We will tie up with a couple of large format retailers in metros and tier 2-3 cities and bring down the present delivery time of about three days to a few hours," says Bala Parthasarthy, man-

aging director, Snapfish.

Snapfish, which sold hundreds of personalised photo posters, desktop calendars ranging between Rs 199 and Rs 399 during November-January, is now gearing up to sell even more customised photobooks as gifts of choice during the marriage season.

The company recorded 40 million online transactions last year, a number that has almost doubled year on year. "Cheaper online photo printing options have allowed consumers to think beyond the traditional 4x6 photo prints," says Parthasarthy. Snapfish's revenues in India too have doubled in the last few months.

Earlier, Snapfish and baby care brand Huggies had forged an alliance to launch co-branded photo centres that would enable parents to print, share and store unlimited photographs of their babies online while providing an extensive range of personalised products.

The photo imaging industry is moving into clothing that has consumers'



own images inserted within a hip graphic on high-performance or tailored fashion and may even include jewelled appliqué. Other online photo service players like Kodak Easy Share, iTasveer and Photoswift too are working on customised and cheaper gifts.

For instance, iTasveer believes that lifestyle photo products are moving into the territory of consumer self-expression and storytelling. "The unique

thing about the iTasveer experience is that we provide users with a very comprehensive web browser-based designing tool called Doodlepad. So, the products tend to have a kind of personality as users spend a lot of time designing their stuff," explains Animesh Jain of iTasveer.

Meanwhile, HP has also launched a new web service called the MagCloud that facilitates printing of inexpensive glossy magazine, allowing users to print customised magazines.