

# INDUSTRY PROFILE

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## CNG Business Services

Last week RN reported that CNG Business Services is offering companies you work with the ability to communicate in Urdu, Polish and a host of other languages. Owner Sanjeev Patel says the Ethnic Sales and Marketing Service is a sensitive and helpful way to communicate with retailers and boost profits



### RETAIL NEWSAGENT Tell us about your new Ethnic Sales and Marketing Service.

**SANJEEV PATEL** Suppliers and wholesalers want to contact retailers effectively and we specialise in communicating with people who are difficult to reach for cultural and linguistic reasons.

We are primarily a buying group and business service provider for independent retailers and we offer a 24/7 service.

For some years we have had 50 multilingual staff in Mumbai working shifts to contact retailers at the right time.

This is something which suppliers have noticed and are increasingly asking to use.

### RN Which brands do you work with?

**SP** Companies like Payzone and Toshiba, for their in-store photocopier systems and e-top up terminals.

We work with brands that sell phonecards, specifically those that specialise in products for ethnically diverse communities.

### RN Shouldn't public-facing businesses be encouraged to speak English?

**SP** In a perfect world everybody would be able to speak English perfectly. Unfortunately, the reality is that while retailers born in the UK can speak English well, many others can't.

As much as I'd like everybody's primary business language to be English, that's not going to happen.

Sometimes you get an older person

answering the phone who feels more comfortable speaking in Urdu, so using this language will mean they are willing to ask more questions.

Around 80%-90% of our calls are in English, but even an initial greeting in another language can build rapport and we can assist if someone is stumbling on a word.

### RN What services do you provide?

**SP** We let retailers know about special offers, promotions, changes in signage or layout - anything like that.

Many companies have reps and our teams can work with them on sales strategies.

Other smaller ones rely more heavily on us to introduce new products and explain how to sell them. We also report back on how sales or services can be improved.



**Knowing a religious calendar is a way of building a closer relationship between retailers and our clients**

### RN You say you take into account "cultural sensitivities." Can you explain this?

**SP** We wouldn't ring up a Pakistani retailer and offer them a promotion on bacon crisps, but many brands wouldn't understand that this could be an insult and a cultural faux pas.

We provide this knowledge. Plus, many English-speaking retailers celebrate occasions such as Eid.

Knowing a religious calendar is a way of building a closer relationship between retailers and our clients. We can arrange promotions to suit festivals such as Eid or Diwali.

### RN This new service is part of CNG Business Services. Tell us about this company.

**SP** We are a family business which has grown from a newsagent my family owned 40 years ago.

Out of that shop we developed a group of companies to help with retail and property services.

In the 1980s we started an ice cream buying group which linked lots of independent retailers to get better terms from Wall's.

We diversified into bulk-buying and other services.

### RN How does a company go from independent retail to multilingual sales?

**SP** Some of our suppliers started asking if we could help them with the odd campaign.

We realised that this is a growing market and quickly developed this outsourcing solution.

## \*\* Company CV \*\*

**Company** CNG Business Services

**Owner** Sanjeev Patel

**Profile** The York-based company is an inspiration for any retailer who sees their store as a launch pad for a bigger business empire. From a single newsagent in the early 1970s, the company has transformed into a business service supplier, broker and buying group.

**Latest news** The company recently started assisting suppliers who want to improve dialogue with retailers. It interacts with thousands of retailers with little English, or who have greater confidence in languages such as Urdu, Arabic or Polish.

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