

Cash is Still King

MasterCard sees opportunity in a currency-dominated world

Money Transactions.

Eighty-five percent of the world's transactions are in cash. And transferring cash to digital is one of MasterCard's big opportunities. "One of the reasons people don't transact is they don't have access to those instruments, so we have a whole set of initiatives, especially around prepaid," says MasterCard's Mario Shiliashki.

"Whether it's distributing social security benefits on a card rather than through other means, whether it's having the ability for parents to put in extra funds to a student's card that they can also use as an ID on campus and purchase goods and pay their tuition electronically."

New Digs. Athletic retailer LuluLemon will open 14 pop-up stores across Canada and the U.S. from April through to September to target new guests, drive additional sales and showcase the brand in unexpected place.



Larissa Faw

The Business Roundup

Tax Cheat. The Earned Income Tax credit is one of the largest government social programs in the country and the IRS estimates that approximately \$13 billion to \$15 billion of improper payments were made to the EIC in 2013, says H&R Block. In fact, under federal law, every government agency is required to disclose their highest risk financial transactions and the EIC is the

only risk noted on the consistent basis by the IRS.

Saving Spots. Drivers reserved over 192,000 overnight parking spaces during 2013 via TravelCenters of America's Reserve-It parking initiative, up from just 19,000 in 2012. The travel center developer also continued to extend the reach of its truck repair and maintenance services by expanding emergency roadside repair capacity and offering preventative maintenance services.

Asian Drugs. High Cholesterol concerns aren't only impacting Americans. Pfizer reports Lipitor sales in China were up 45 percent last year.

Rising Costs. Coffee costs may be sky-rocketing, but sugar, on the other hand, looks to be stable, says Krispy Kreme which is locked into sugar prices for this year and for all of calendar '15. "So sugar is a known number," says Krispy Kreme's Jim Morgan. "Right now on shorten-

ing and flour [prices], I think we're pretty well locked up for Q3 and are probably buying currently into Q4 of this year."

Getting Saucy. It is costing more to make pizzas at Casey's General Store. The average cost of cheese this quarter was \$2.58 per pound compared to \$1.89 a year ago, say the convenience chain. Meat has also risen dramatically over the last three to four months, up somewhere between 20-30 percent.

Future Phones. Technology firm RealD is working on 2D and 3D technologies for smartphones and tablets. Unlike other 3D solutions in the market that use external filters on the display, executives say their patented intelligent backlight technology allows them to manipulate and focus the light sources in a mobile device directly to the users eyes. This enables glasses free 3D viewing and provides certain 3D benefits, such as power savings. RealD expects to

make it commercially available in calendar 2015.

Moonshine. The Jack Daniel's family of alcohol brands saw net sales growth of 10 percent in markets outside the U.S. and 6 percent in the U.S., says parent company Brown-Forman. And the company has begun testing Jack Daniel's Tennessee Fire, a new flavored spirit that tastefully blends the Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey with a red-hot cinnamon flavor.

Quality Sleep. Americans are happy with their beds. Mattress Firm Holdings reports sluggish and flat traffic trends for the first four months of this year. However, the chain is encouraged by Memorial Day sales and think several new mattress models, particularly Tempur-Pedic, will drive consumers to their stores this summer.

Larissa Faw covers business trends for Forbes, The Motley Fool and other outlets. Contact her at larissafaw@gmail.com.

SPONSORSHIP AD

Cash is Still King

MasterCard sees opportunity in a currency-dominated world

Money Transactions. Eighty-five percent of the world's transactions are in cash. And transferring cash to digital is one of MasterCard's big opportunities. "One of the reasons people don't transact is they don't have access to those instruments, so we have a whole set of initiatives, especially around prepaid," says MasterCard's Mario Shiliashki. "Whether it's distributing social security benefits on a card rather than through other means, whether it's having the ability for parents to put in extra funds to a student's card that they can also use as an ID on campus and purchase goods and pay their tuition electronically."

**Larissa Faw**

The Business Roundup

New Digs. Athletic retailer LuluLemon will open 14 pop-up stores across Canada and the U.S. from April through to September to target new guests, drive additional sales and showcase the brand in unexpected place.

Tax Cheat. The Earned Income Tax credit is one of the largest government social programs in the country and the IRS estimates that approximately \$13 billion to \$15 billion of improper payments were made to the EIC in 2013, says H&R Block. In fact, under federal law, every government agency is required to disclose their highest risk financial transactions and the EIC is the only risk noted on the consistent basis by the IRS.

Saving Spots. Drivers reserved over 192,000 overnight parking spaces during 2013 via TravelCenters of America's Reserve-It parking initiative, up from just 19,000 in 2012. The travel center developer also continued to extend the reach of its truck repair and maintenance services by expanding emergency roadside repair capacity and offering preventative maintenance services.

Asian Drugs. High Cholesterol concerns aren't only impacting Americans. Pfizer reports Lipitor sales in China were up 45 percent last year.

Rising Costs. Coffee costs may be sky-rocketing, but sugar, on the other hand, looks to be stable, says Krispy Kreme which is locked into sugar prices for this year and for all of calendar '15. "So sugar is a known number," says Krispy Kreme's Jim Morgan. "Right now on shortening and flour [prices], I think we're pretty well locked up for Q3 and are probably buying currently into Q4 of this year."

Getting Saucy. It is costing more to make pizzas at Casey's General Store. The average cost of cheese this quarter was \$2.58 per pound compared to \$1.89 a year ago, say the convenience chain. Meat has also risen dramatically over the last three to four months, up somewhere between 20-30 percent.

Future Phones. Technology firm RealD is working on 2D and 3D technologies for smartphones and tablets. Unlike other 3D solutions in the market that use external filters on the display, executives say their patented intelligent backlight technology allows them to manipulate and focus the light sources in a mobile device directly to the users eyes. This enables glasses free 3D viewing and provides certain 3D benefits, such as power savings. RealD expects to make it commercially available in calendar 2015.

Moonshine. The Jack Daniel's family of alcohol brands saw net sales growth of 10 percent in markets outside the U.S. and 6 percent in the U.S., says parent company Brown-Forman. And the company has begun testing Jack Daniel's Tennessee Fire, a new flavored spirit that tastefully blends the Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey with a red-hot cinnamon flavor.

Quality Sleep. Americans are happy with their beds. Mattress Firm Holdings reports sluggish and flat traffic trends for the first four months of this year. However, the chain is encouraged by Memorial Day sales and think several new mattress models, particularly Tempur-Pedic, will drive consumers to their stores this summer.

Larissa Faw covers business trends for Forbes, The Motley Fool and other outlets. Contact her at larissafaw@gmail.com.

SPONSORSHIP**AD**