Targeting the future

Peter England introduces a new retail concept to keep pace with the changing face of the youth in India

Kedar Apsankar, chief operating officer, Peter England brand (part of Aditya Birla’s Madura Garments) is on a roll. Compared to the other Madura Garment brands – namely Van Heusen, Louis Philippe and Allen Solly – Peter England, which was launched in 1997, got a major makeover when Apsankar took over as COO. The brand realigned its staid image by providing Indian customers a range of ethnic wear, which saw the company growing by 25 per cent, making the brand more modern. The ₹1,000 crore brand is now considered an anchor for the young millennial.

With over 10 million garments sold every year, Peter England is now strengthening its presence by increasing its national presence, with 650 exclusive stores to be increased to 750 by the end of FY15. The multi-brand outlets’ tally is expected to go up to 2,000 in 700 towns, as compared to 300 last year. This expansion has seen the brand earning the title ‘one of the most exciting brands’, apart from being the ‘most trusted amongst consumers’ in the readymade apparel category as well.

However, keeping to its vision, Peter England is concentrating on the mid-price segment and is expanding its range, with the latest collection for 2014 comprising a diverse range of casuals, semi-formals, wedding and party wear and formal wear, comprising of suits and blazers. The aim is to target a 20 per cent volume growth, which is “way ahead of the market, which grew at 12 per cent,” says Apsankar.

Unique retail concept

For Peter England, winning three prestigious awards in the retail industry was an auspicious beginning for 2014. The awards included GOLD for the ‘Best Store Front’ and the ‘Best Store Front Signage’, as well as a MERIT 2 for ‘Western Fashion Apparel – Specialty Store’ at the Visual Merchandising and Retail Design awards for 2014.

Realising that it has to keep the customer for life, Peter England has come up with a unique retail concept for its customers – the Peter England generation store, which gives the brand a new retail identity. As per the new formulation, its customer base, with research done over the past one year, comprises not only of people in their early and mid-20s but even older age groups from early 30s onwards.

A first-of-its-kind-retailing concept, Peter England’s generation store helps the young professional journey through the key stages of life and career, with each segment having a particular type of dress for a stage in life. This matches the consumer’s needs and expectations and the expert’s advice on the tipping points trigger the transition from one stage to another.

Each of these stores is spread over a 1,200 sq ft area and every three floor section, allotted for each different segment, reflects the journey of today’s generation through the different life stages in an endearing manner. The first level provides merchandise for the young and just-after-college consumer, matching what’s in trend, is versatile, can be used on any occasion and is price-sensitive in relation to consumers in their early 20s. They are predominantly jeans and casual wear.

Then comes the early jobber segment for the new professional who is reining in, entering an unfamiliar territory and needs to dress for the office. This section specialises in formal wear, with casual wear thrown in for Friday wear. Lastly comes the older working men’s segment, offering the ‘Elite by Peter England’ – a premium sub-brand from Peter England for the mature working consumers.

“Formal wear is coming back into fashion especially among the youth,” says Apsankar. “This will drive sales and growth for 2014-15.”

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