

retail excellence

→ The footwear market in India is estimated to be around ₹52,000 crore and it is growing at approximately 12-15 percent per annum. The urban centric educated youth today are more fashion conscious and they now consider footwear as an integral part of their attire. This has created a demand for different styles of footwear in order to match one's dress for different occasions.

Footwear retailing is fast switching from traditional to modern organised way. New brands have entered the scene with organised retailing concept to meet the growing demand. Consumers have become more

knowledgeable as well as choosy because they have more options to look at and buy; therefore, customer service both sale and post sale is important. The brands are seriously looking at it and adopting various means to provide better customer service for brand recall. Furthermore, online shoe selling has picked up in the recent years and is growing at a very brisk pace.

Matching up with the pace of time, Touristor stepped on the bandwagon almost a decade back, when they chose to go with more contemporary way of retailing, which was to stock all the leading brands and create an



Ved Vyas Chhabra, Founder, Touristor

Walking on a Success Path



By Shubhra Saini

KOLKATA-BASED FOOTWEAR RETAILER, TOURISTOR WAS LAUNCHED IN 2004, WHEN THEY OPENED THEIR FIRST STORE IN BHUBANESWAR AT THE FORUM MART. THE BRAND HAS STEMMED OUT OF THE PARENT COMPANY KNOWN AS BHARAT SHOES. AND, JUST IN A SPAN OF 10 YEARS, TOURISTOR HAS BECOME A NAME TO RECKON WITH. THE COMPANY CURRENTLY HAS 31 OPERATIONAL OUTLETS AND IS BULLISH TO EXPAND NATIONALLY. THE BRANDED FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY WILL GROW BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS IN COMING FEW YEARS, BELIEVES VED VYAS CHHABRA, FOUNDER OF TOURISTOR

MBO of their own. The company has history in footwear retailing with their earlier brand called as "Bharat Shoes."

Talking about their USP and marketing techniques, Chhabra says: "Touristor is positioned to cater mid- and high-mid urban centric consumers. It is equipped with product for every member of the family; in a way Touristor outlets are more of a family stores, but our

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focus is basically on the age group of 18-45 years. This is a unique position in the market as not many organised players are in this segment because the quality and design we provide are at a price which is very comfortable to our target audience. People of all age groups visit our stores including families, but the numbers of young consumers is more.”

“The target audience can be an indicator of what type of customers visit our stores. It is a typical profile of an urban centric educated, under handsome income bracket, who are well versed of the world around them. As customer profile cannot be stagnant, we are generally experiencing a steady change in the attitude, product knowledge, etc. of a customer, which helps us study the customer behaviour and serve him in a much better way,” he adds.

EXCELLING IN RETAIL

Touristor opened their first store, having a carpet area of around 1,000 sq.ft., at Forum Mart, Bhubaneswar, in 2002. Talking about the investments, Chhabra informs: “We had invested around ₹30 lakh in interior and merchandise and later we continued to open more exclusive outlets at various places in East India. Most of our stores sell 70 percent of our own branded merchandise, that is Touristor, and rest 30 percent are major national and international footwear brands that we market and sell. We have different sections for various types of footwear. There is also a dedicated section for a particular brand, which we market through our stores.”

Touristor has total 31 operational stores spread across around 28,000 sq.ft. The company’s annual sale is approximately ₹30 crore. The best-selling products are the ladies footwear of their own brand “Touristor.” According to Chhabra: “The price point ranges between ₹349 and ₹3,499; our average selling price point is between ₹499 and ₹1,299.”

Further talking about the need of innovation in this line of business, Chhabra states: “Our endeavour is providing new trendy design and style to our valued customers regularly.

With this end-in-view, our design team is constantly evolving new design and coordinating with our vendors to help them manufacture those effectively and timely.”

He adds: “The brand Touristor was born to cater to the emerging fashion-conscious, urban-centric customers. This segment is ever increasing. Our main aim is to keep ourselves updated with this fast changing world of fashion and style and provide our customers the latest. If we do an overview of our customer profile, it is interesting to note that there is no sea change, but there are small complex changes in the behavioural pattern of the customers in the matter of fashion and style. So we have kept the pace with our customer’s demand and taste.”



Touristor is positioned to cater mid- and high-mid urban centric consumers. The focus is basically on the age group of 18-45 years

TOP PERFORMING STORES

Location of store: City Center, Salt Lake, Kolkata; Mani Square mall, Kolkata; Grand Hotel Arcade, Kolkata; Forum Mart, Bhubaneswar; Main Road, Ranchi

Catchment of customers: All these stores have wide catchment area, and all stores are well established

Total area (sq.ft.): Around 8,000

Average monthly sales (₹): 14 lakh

Average bill size (₹): 1,200-1,500

Average footfalls: Around 1,200 per week

Velocity-sales/sq.ft./month (₹): 650/sq.ft./month

Sales growth y-o-y: Around 20 percent

“The average carpet area of our stores is 1,000 sq.ft. The investments are around ₹30 lakh and the expected ROI is approximately 22 percent per annum,” he reveals. Touristor also has a loyalty programme and according to Chhabra it has helped in increasing their brand recalling frequency as well as considerable growth in sales.

BRANDS AT THE STORE

Touristor is an MBO and has plethora of brands under the same roof. Apart from their own brand “Touristor,” the retailer also stocks brands such as Red Tape, Alberto Torresi, Mardigrass, Gas, Lotto, Disney, Liberty, Tweety among others.

According to Chhabra: “We have around 50 percent ladies, 25 percent of children and 25 percent of men’s

footwear. We do not have any plans for category expansion; in fact there is no scope of expansion as far as footwear is concerned.”

IN FUTURE

Chhabra says: “We have plans to expand our base in the cities including Hyderabad, Chennai, Bangalore, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Surat, Baroda, Pune, Delhi, Chandigarh, Dehradun, Kolkata, Patna, Jamshedpur, Guwahati, Shillong, Tinsukia, and Dibrugarh, among others”

The retailer has already joined hands with one of the large-format retail chain stores of North and taken over their footwear department to run the same under Touristor brand name. ❑