

Fashion brand Tommy Hilfiger aims at 40 outlets by 2009

Riding on a burgeoning middle class with deep pockets, international fashion brand Tommy Hilfiger aims to ramp up its outlets in India to 40 by next year, up from the 30 it has opened in the four years since it launched in the country.

'We are at a phase where we understand Indian consumers and their needs. We have our presence in so many Indian cities and we don't think that our competitors will manage to expand their business in a short period of time to reach our levels,' Tommy Hilfiger Apparel India CEO Shailesh Chaturvedi told IANS.

Today the brand has a presence in 12 major cities - Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Chandigarh, Chennai, Delhi, Gurgaon, Hyderabad, Jalandhar, Kolkata, Lucknow, [Mumbai](#) and Pune - with 14 stand-alone stores and 16 shop-in-shop stores.

Tommy Hilfiger has been rated as the No.1 brand by Women's Wear Daily in its WWD100 survey of the most recognised brands in the US. In September, in an exclusive deal, the brand's complete collection of men's and women's wear and accessories were rolled out in 550 Macy's outlets in the US. In November, the company plans to open a huge 20,000 sq ft flagship store on the prestigious Fifth Avenue in Manhattan spread over four floors.

The brand launched in India in April 2004 through Arvind Murjani Brands Pvt Ltd, a 50:50 joint venture between the Murjani group, a 77-year-old global group with a proven track record in international and Indian markets and the Ahmedabad-based Arvind Mills.

According to Chaturvedi, the brand has already crossed its target of Rs.1 billion (\$21 million) in sales per year.

'We do our homework before launching a store. We know where our market lies. Meticulous planning and a scientific approach is the reason for our 100 percent growth,' he maintained.

Toward this end, the brand chose the swish Khan Market in central Delhi to launch its 30th store in a shopping complex rather than in a mall, which otherwise is the preferred destination of most international and domestic upmarket brands.

'Khan Market with its premium and cool outlook is at a very exciting stage of growth - buzzing with niche boutiques, eateries and lifestyle stores. With the launch of this store, consumers will have access to an international range apparel and accessories,' Chaturvedi pointed out.

'Khan Market caters to a number of foreigners and diplomats, who will be our target consumers,' he added.

As for the label's expansion plans Chaturvedi said second outlets would be opened in cities like Ahmedabad, [Bangalore](#) and Pune, as also in some of the other cities where it already has a presence. An outlet is also planned in India's diamond capital of Surat.

All Tommy Hilfiger stores showcase the best of international trends that are very youthful, stylish and energetic.

'Fashion trends are converging everywhere and thanks to the media, people know what is in and what is out. Our design team in the US develops the line based on international trends. We have a team that focuses mainly on style trends and forecasts,' Chaturvedi explained.

'We source all our products from the US but keep the Indian fit and size in mind. Our color palette, trends, pricing and quality remains the same worldwide.

'What we offer is an international collection at an international price,' Chaturvedi said.

Thus, the apparel range starts at Rs.2,000 for a shirt to Rs.40,000 for a jacket. The accessories start at Rs.2,500 and go up to Rs.7,500.

'If you are looking for good quality, you tend to get used to a brand. Our loyal costumers will always come back to us,' Chaturvedi maintained.

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