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Passion For Fashion

The recipe of success for this fastest growing apparel company in the country can well be attributed to its global supply chain and a wide network of more than 7,800 retail stores across 750 cities



OVERALL RANK: 41
**ADITYA BIRLA FASHION
AND RETAIL**
MANAGING AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:
PRANAB BARUA
OVERALL AVG. SCORE: 10.3
REVENUES: Rs 6,633 CRORE

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by Abid Hasan

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Clocking revenues to the tune of Rs 6,633 crore this fiscal year, Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail (ABFR) entered BW Businessworld's MRC index with a bang. The fashion giant also emerged as the leader of the nation's retail sector in BW Businessworld's MRC survey.

The recipe of success for this fastest growing apparel company in the country can well be attributed to its global supply chain and a wide network of more than 7,800 retail stores across 750 cities.

ABFR originated in January 2016 when Pantaloons Fashion & Retail officially merged with Madura Fashion and Lifestyle, earlier, a division of Aditya Birla Nuvo. In the past year, the company has focused on expanding its presence across identified high growth areas of the market. “While our brands in the past were predominantly only in the metro cities, we are now expanding our reach to tier-3 and tier-4 cities, thereby, creating an opportunity for the large and diverse population of our country to experience our brands first hand,” says Pranab Barua, head of the Apparel and Food Retail Businesses of the Aditya Birla Group, which recorded a combined turnover of Rs 10,500 crore in FY17.

Climbing up the Ladder

ABFR embarked on the rapid development of its portfolio and continued growth in all of its verticals. Madura Fashion and Lifestyle brands have grown with a strong compound annual growth rate of nearly 20 per cent over the last ten years due to brand extensions, new product categories and rapid distribution expansion. Pantaloons, acquired in 2013, with 65 stores, is now growing by 25 per cent per annum adding 50 to 60 stores per year.

The pace of ABFR’s growth has been frenetic, and consumer demand for its brands and products has been insatiable which makes it India’s fastest-growing retail store chain.

Expanding its arms, ABFR acquired rights of the Californian fast fashion brand ‘Forever 21’ last year. The same year, it also acquired the rights of iconic British brands like Ted Baker and Simon Carter, which will be launched later this year.

“The company over the last two decades witnessed several transformations which required redefining business proposition, refining business models, building capabilities and creating new segments. ABFR’s core brands were built in the late ‘90’s by creating distinctive brands and strong value proposition in a nascent and primarily unbranded market,” says Barua.

Strategising Success

ABFR has revamped its own e-commerce websites and also invested soundly in building a distinctive omni-channel presence across the country. “This initiative has provided consumers with an integrated shopping experience. It strengthens our relationships with major e-commerce players through marketplace integration and converts an emerging threat to our business into a big opportunity,” says Barua.

The branded apparel business model has transformed from a wholesale-driven business to a multi-channel business. The concept of focusing primarily on exclusive branded stores for each of these brands paid rich dividends and the business expanded aggressively across the country. Its brands like Louis Philippe, Van Heusen, Allen Solly and Peter England are well past the Rs 1000-crore revenue mark.