

## ADITYA BIRLA CENTRE OF RETAIL EXCELLENCE LAUNCHED IN BANGALORE.

At Pantaloons, we are committed to bringing alive a world of opportunities for our employees. From providing them with development programmes and performance incentives, to ongoing feedback reports – our employees are continuously improving,

IN a landmark effort to meet the growing talent shortage in the burgeoning Indian retail sector, the US \$40 billion Aditya Birla Group (ABG), which has a significant presence in the country's retail sector, opened the first Aditya Birla Centre of Retail Excellence (ABCRE), in Kormangala, Bangalore on 8th May 2013.

Four more centers will be opened over the next two months in Delhi, Hyderabad, Chennai and Mumbai. These centers will train and develop the retail workforce in order to meet the current and future manpower requirements of the group's retail operations.

Besides aiming to drive topline growth and reduce costs, the initiative will focus on increasing productivity, reducing attrition and ensure dramatic improvements in customer service. For employees undergoing training at ABCRE, it means opportunities to upgrade their skill levels thereby leading to faster career growth.

"The Indian retail sector is facing an acute shortage of 'employable' talent, even as there is growing focus on service standards in the industry," said Mr. Pranab Barua, Business Director, Apparel & Retail Business, The Aditya Birla Group. "ABCRE hopes to fill this gap by training new recruits and upgrading the skills levels of the existing staff."

According to Mr. Barua, ABCRE will also provide a competitive advantage to the retail business by facilitating differentiated retail operation standards, building competence on 'best' and 'next' retail practices across formats and creating Centers of Excellence (COEs). These COEs will provide leadership on functional research across various retail formats.

The ABCRE will provide the group companies that have a strong presence in retail – Aditya Birla Retail Ltd. (ABRL), Madura Fashion & Lifestyle (MFL) and Pantaloon Fashions & Retail Limited (PFRL) – with a competitive advantage in the retail business. All three companies have a cumulative strong retail network of more than 1,400 stores in 150 cities across India.

The ABCRE training centers will ultimately cover 18 cities including smaller ones such as Vizag, Cochin, Mysore, Nasik, Indore, Thane and Vadodara. The training centers will deploy modern teaching methods including e-learning and mobile learning tools. The centers will singularly focus on competency training for the retail staff.

The Kormangala centre which got opened on 8th May, is spread over 3,940 sq.ft., has three training rooms which can turnaround 75 trainees at a time.