



India's First Cult Footwear Brand

ID's core consumer falls between the age group of 18-25 years, who are college goers and young professionals. The brand, owned by M&B Footwear, aims to set up a minimum of 50 exclusive ID flagship stores across all major cities in India. With aggressive market consolidation and product diversification already underway, M&B's director **Inder Dev Singh Musafir** has valid reason to be optimistic. The biggest factor which differentiates between ID is the choice of its innovative materials, colours and tooling, he tells S&A during an interaction.



Tell us about ID.

ID, India's first cult footwear brand, aims to create a unique line of products that draw from various elements of fashion. ID's core consumer falls between the age group of 18-25 years, who are college goers and young professionals; have a knack to do things differently; go beyond conventional boundaries; follow new fashion trends; love music; and participate in off-beat events.

How successfully has ID expanded its product portfolio over the years? How distinct are its products?

Our team travels around the world to not only discover emerging trends, new materials, new tooling/ techniques, etc. but also to truly understand the mindset of the young. With the help of these new learnings and extensive collaborations with our international channel partners, our design team creates footwear that is distinctive and stylish. These unique designs reflect the mindset of our target consumers, who believe in the quality ID produces. Together, they have made ID into a real 'CULT' brand.

Although our focus is on building the potential of our existing product portfolio, but at the same time we are consistently working towards exploring new product categories. ID's current product portfolio has over 300 designs in different product groups like Boots, Sneakers, Rugged Casuals, Sandals and Flip-Flops.

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What factors make the products different in the market? What factor/s has majorly contributed to the brand's success in India?

The biggest factor which differentiates between ID is the choice of its innovative materials, colours and tooling. Every product is distinct compared to what is available today in the cluttered footwear market. Special surface treatments on leather, hybrid combination of materials, construction and adoption of exclusive moulds and dies make it further unique and authentic within its segment.

How robust is the brand's production capacity compared with those operating in the same domain?

Our company M&B Footwear has over 2 decades of in-depth experience in making casual/ leisure leather shoes for several national and international brands, including the very successful LEE COOPER brand that our company represents in India. We have 2 state-of-the-art manufacturing

facilities in India, with a capacity to produce 8,000 pairs each in a single shift. This capacity can easily be doubled to meet the growing market demand. We also take stringent measures to keep quality check during production and lay great emphasis on after-sales service to our customers.

Being a country with young population, how much growth is the brand eyeing in the coming years?



After looking at the overwhelming response of the consumers in the last 2 years, we are targeting exponential growth in the coming years. The exposure and learnings that we received from selling through online sales channels is being translated to penetrate the offline channel of sales too.

By 2021, our aim is to set up a minimum of 50 exclusive ID flagship stores across all major cities in India. We are already in the process of launching the ID range of apparel and accessories by Mid-2019, for this we are also looking for reliable channel partners who can join our quest and represent us.

In which regions of the country do the brand's products enjoy strong demand? What products have been doing significantly well?

Though it is too early to reach to a conclusion as to which region is performing better since as of now we have limited offline presence. However, we have seen through our online sale data that majority of the customers are from South and West. Therefore, looking at this, as part of our expansion strategy, we are launching exclusive ranges through modern retail and MBO's currently only



in these two regions. Other markets will be targeted in the forthcoming season.

Since ID brand is known for casuals and the lifestyle product segment, the current response of these lines is extremely good.

Kindly explain ID's retail consolidation over the years. What new strategy is the brand planning?

Currently, ID products are available across 300 stores which include all major modern retails/key account stores like Metro, Lifestyle, Central, Shoppers Stop, Reliance and selective Regional Chain stores & MBO's.

By the end of 2018, we plan to have the ID brand selling through over 2000 doors across India, this being possible, thanks to the our company's well established and very strong distribution and modern retail network already being in place.

How strong is the brand's online retail approach? How is it positioned today in the sector?

With digital advancement and the growth in the internet habitual customers, e-commerce is becoming an eminent platform for the fashion industry. Improved supply chain (fast delivery/easy returns/cash on delivery/etc.), frequent special events and gratifying promotions, have further increased market penetration thanks to the e-commerce platform.

Majority of the brick-and-mortar retail stores are still concentrated in larger cities and are unable to meet the rising aspirations of the consumer in smaller cities across India, whereas e-commerce has made it possible to reach and deliver to smaller towns where brick-and-mortar retail stores are either not viable or have very less penetration.



We consider e-commerce as an important and growing channel for ID brand, and have a strategic - strategic plan in place for differentiating - differentiating on-line and off-line merchandise, so as to avoid any cannibalisation of the business in either segments.

What is your marketing strategy?

Looking at the change in the consumer behaviour, in our opinion digital marketing is a major medium for advertising. Today the youth are spending a good amount of time on smartphones and internet to keep themselves informed, and actively participating in expressing their opinion on social media. This breed of the new age consumers are the core target customers of the ID brand.

The ID brand is very active on all digital platforms and social media like facebook, twitter and Instagram. Within the last year or so, the ID Facebook page already has more than 2.5 lakh fans, which showcases the brand's popularity amongst the youth. In the coming season, we will also be actively using other mediums of advertising such as newspapers, billboards, TV and cinema in order to increase brand awareness. We are in the process of finalising sponsorships to youth-centric TV reality shows and live events that target the youth.