

INTERVIEW

In a brand extension exercise, menswear brand, Peter England, from the Madura Fashion & Lifestyle, has forayed into the luggage segment, launching a range of work and travel bags. Kedar Apshankar, COO, Peter England, in an interview with Dhaleta Surender Kumar of Pitch talks about other extension plans of the brand and its marketing approach for the bags.. Excerpts:

Peter England received quite success in the menswear apparel segment. If it has decided to get into brand extension, so why just bags?

Bags is our first big diversification. Though it would be a bit premature to talk about it, but there is a lot of research and development going on. We are looking at footwear, deo sprays and home furnishing too.

Brands like Fastrack have also ventured into the bags category. Their positioning is based on fun? How do you see yourself different from Fastrack?

I don't think we are calling it a fun category. We are looking at work. A youngster

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to carry and take space. All these years, the category has been seen to be restrictive and not as an enabler. Today, more youngsters are taking their work home, and even taking work outside office. Here luggage and bags have to become an enabler, which not only carry things but do not add to weight, and are not a mere depository but where consumers keep their valuables, priorities and their milestones. There is a lot of ambition that is kept secure inside the bags. They become the marker of one's identity and one's progress. So from that point of view, a bag is just not a bag but indeed the carrier of one's purpose and hence the positioning.

So is it a style statement or just an enabler?

Of course it is a style statement. It is an

are focusing on. I think we will be the first bag to do so, like we did with shirts and trousers 15 years back for our consumers. There are various brands out there but not our direct competitors.

So who's your target group?

We define them from the point of view of age group, early 20s to early 30s in the SEC A and B, and are in the metros, Tier I and Tier II cities. We want to stay focused on the consumers who are in the first ten years of their work life.

From a placement point of view, where do the bags find themselves a shelf?

In our exclusive Peter England stores, where we sell our shirts and trousers too. A separate space would be carved out in the existing stores, where there

“Our bags will have a seasonal approach”

could be going to work in an office or to work in an university. So we are not differentiating between fun and work. The definition gets completed if you see it from a work and travel angle.

Is that why you are positioning the bags as 'Carrier of Purpose'?

Historically bags and luggage have been perceived as something bulky, something that are used for carrying things from place A to B, something which is difficult

accessory and all accessories are supposed to enhance the style of the consumer. But Peter England bags go beyond just being an accessory.

Where do you place yourself vis-a-vis new competition that has emerged from Fastrack?

We don't believe that there is direct competition right now. There is no other brand that is giving work and travel bags to the target group we

will be a separate visual merchandising for the bags.

Please share with us your marketing plans for the bags.

We have a marketing campaign that was on air till last week. The campaign was in mainline print, outdoor and digital.

Why not television?

We don't think that it is necessary at this stage. These decisions are made

keeping in mind the appropriateness of the product strategy the retail strategy and the media strategy.

Please share some details about your digital plans.

We have a unique website, which is different from the websites that you come across. While we will advertise Peter England bags on our website, we will also tie up with other leading websites to promote our bags, like Yahoo, Google, Hotmail, MSN, besides others. We also have an interesting marketing initiative going on with our CRM customers. We have a large CRM customer database having over 10 lakh customers. We are talking to them directly in different ways and making them aware of our bags. We also have our own Facebook page and we advertise on that medium as well. There are customers who track our brand and progress. Our digital strategy is a combination of many things.

When will your next phase of promotion start?

In the upcoming festive season and that

apparels - including Peter England, and other Madura brands - we come up with seasonal merchandise. That is the way fashion industry behaves. Our bags are being created in the similar manner. So the expertise we have in the area of apparel and fashion, is being leveraged here for the first time.

Our bags will be seek inspiration from every season. We will have specific seasonal design and stability to offer which will enhance the overall look and style of the apparel itself. As seasons change, our products designs evolve accordingly.

What is your marketing budget for this year for the bags category?

Our total market-

ing budget is about five per cent of our revenue, that is where we would like to maintain it, and a large part of the budget will be marked for the development of this category of the bags. ■

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Kedar Apshankar | COO, Peter England

too will focus on print, outdoor and digital.

Any specific plans for the festive season?

We are trying to create interest around seasonal collection of bags. We are trying to build synergy between the apparel segment and the bags. That is where we are different from the retro industry. As you know in

