

LOOK AND FEEL HEALTHY

Athleisure as a segment is growing by leaps and bounds in the country. **Bindu Gopal Rao** underlines the reasons for India becoming exceedingly health conscious in perspective of HRX, India's home-grown activewear brand.



A key driver of the athleisure segment is the fact that Indians are increasingly becoming health conscious and are investing in a fitness wardrobe as well. HRX, India's homegrown activewear brand was founded in November 2013 by Hrithik Roshan and Exceed Entertainment. The collections are a combination of style and substance, which involves Hrithik Roshan and his lifelong dedication to achieve the fittest version of himself. "Our belief is that fitness can change who we are and what we do in all parts of our life", says Hrithik Roshan, Co-Founder, HRX. The name represents the X-factor, signifying one to push oneself towards the path of excellence to achieve the best possible outcome.

ATTENTION ON ATHLEISURE

An example of a successful 'Make in India' story, HRX aims to revolutionise the fitness scenario in India, as a value-for-money, high-quality alternative to international brands. The brand offers a range of products including sports shoes, men's joggers, t-shirts, and select womenswear (joggers, sports bras, t-shirts). The product range can be categorised as, HRX Active Wear, HRX Casual, and HRX Yoga and are available on e-commerce platforms including Myntra, Flipkart, and Jabong. Dominated by vibrant colours, HRX's lightweight products are made of premium fabrics to give the wearer a contemporary fit. HRX has managed an impressive portfolio of liaisons including an on-going fashion partnership with online retail giant, Myntra and a fitness alliance with Curefit. The brand has been successfully delving into new media marketing initiatives including in-film branding, digital content, and successful ATL campaigns. Their endeavour is to constantly grow HRX across new categories, new businesses, and new markets. Afsar Zaidi – Co-Founder HRX and Owner Exceed Entertainment says, "Athleisure is the current buzzword in fashion and rules the roost in every Fashion Week. Theoretically, it is the trend that involves comfortable clothing designed and worn for casual and athletic activities but this trend has taken the world by storm. HRX introduced this trend to the Indian fashion terrain when it was just budding internationally. There were certain far-sightedness and trend analysis which confirmed our belief that people will definitely start aligning themselves to fitness in the years to come and dedicate a part of their wardrobe to activewear and athleisure. It is this insight that made us zero in on the functional and practical clothing category. The clairvoyance paid off and today this is the most spotted trend on all runways and real life."

BEING ACTIVE

The mainstay is activewear and athleisure for men and women. The categories include tees, tops, tanks, tights, joggers, sweatshirts, hoodies, and vests. And apparel forms 75 per cent of their business and overall revenues. "Men's athleisure is our star category. Tees, joggers, tracks, and jeans lead the pack. The styles are in line with international trend stories, namely, graphic tees, infographics, tech formation, geometric shapes and forms, camouflage, etc. all are very much a part of the AW'17 collection. The product quality is great and the pricing is truly value for money for consumers. Since we are an e-commerce brand we can pass on the value to the consumers



saved from the distribution chain," says Zaidi. HRX forayed into women's collection a couple of years ago and is working on growing the category now. HRX is a quintessential sportswear brand and women are as much into fitness nowadays as men are. Hence it is an important audience set that can't be ignored or missed. Having said that, developing activewear for women is a slightly more detailed exercise as opposed to men's activewear for items of clothing like sports bras, fitted vests, comfortable tights etc. require attention to detailing in terms of fit, cut and seamlessness for the fluidity of movement. Alongside the aforesaid, there is a very strong sense of fashion and styling that is brought into women's activewear in tandem with the international trends. Factoring all this, HRX is now poised with an interesting, highly stylized, trendy, and comfortable collection for women.



@Shutterstock.com



@Shutterstock.com



@Shutterstock.com

PRODUCT MATTERS

The brand uses polyester for athletic wear and cotton is the preferred fabric for other items of clothing. Besides, they use mesh fabric for hoodies and things that are in vogue on international runways. Another challenge is to maintain the exclusivity of their products. HRX is exclusively available on Myntra and allied platforms - Jabong and Flipkart. "We run a regular due diligence, across various e-commerce platforms to ensure the counterfeits are recognised and treated duly. The product styles and categories, which are not licensed under HRX or directly, supported by us through any form of business arrangement are not to be sold anywhere. Besides the due diligence, there is a dedicated design and procurement team that

work towards creating products that are true to, and exclusive to HRX. There is a conspicuous language that HRX follows, and it reflects in our products due to alignment within all the teams that work on the brand and the strict adherence to brand guidelines," says Zaidi. Retail is very much a part of the strategy and the natural progression for a brand of HRX's calibre. The process of identification of the right retail partners for MBOs and availability of the right locations for EBOs has begun. "We are working on the same and the plan should see fruition soon. The target looks like the festive season of 2018," says Zaidi.

GROWTH STRATEGY

HRX is looking at investing in an enhanced retail experience through the use of technology.



@Shutterstock.com



@Shutterstock.com



@HRX

Product and design innovation with a continued focus on new category introductions will drive the sales. “Our core focus continues to be Digital Marketing and all our marketing and communication content will serve the purpose of keeping our consumer motivated along his journey towards being the best version of himself,” says Zaidi. “At HRX our belief is that fitness can change who we are and change all part of our lives. It is something we strongly believe in and abide by. I always envisioned HRX to be a platform that could inspire people to be the best version of themselves. Both fitness and lifestyle are crucial to the HRX way of life and hence a natural transition,” adds Zaidi. Looking ahead, the brand aspires to be the world’s best brand in its category! Introduction of new product categories, more effective marketing and communication, the introduction of technology and performance in the product,

offline retail presence, and initiation of a fit India movement- all form part of their future plans. “We have just partnered with Xiaomi on a long-term collaboration that will see a lot of innovation towards current and newer products. The partnership with Xiaomi to launch the Mi Band - HRX Edition is an opportune decision as they are in sync with our philosophy. We are excited about launching anything new and innovative around the two pillars of HRX - fashion and fitness. Soon HRX will pan across all relevant categories pertaining to the life of a fitness enthusiast or an aspirant of fit living. The brand takes off from various facets of Hrithik Roshan’s lifestyle and fitness regime to create value offering for consumers in relevant categories. We have a lot of interesting business partnerships in the pipeline that will be announced over the course of time,” concludes Zaidi. ■