

75. The other channel is to corporates where we want to be the preferred supplier and have targeted about 100 such customers. The third channel is to have an online shop by the end of June that will be piloted in Mumbai and Pune.

What are the key challenges being faced in the market?

The biggest challenge is having a consistent market which will return consistent pricing to the grower. Also with the weather being inconsistent there are some growing challenges as there is a consistency that is required. Also to tap into foreign markets there are ethical requirements that need to be adhered to.

What kind of initial trends have you seen?

Although it is early days, some clear trends we see especially in Mumbai is that demography matters as does location as our South Mumbai outlets are doing well. People are appreciating the quality of flowers and the fact that we are using ecofriendly packaging and flower foods are being appreciated. In fact when we did a survey we had equal number of responses for people who said premium flowers at Rs. 920 was reasonable and one set felt Rs. 360 was expensive. So we also have a range that starts at Rs. 250 and we are clear that we will be able to work with all the markets in India.

How are flowers kept fresh through the value chain?

We buy directly from the growers who we also give technical support that helps us know the product completely. Secondly we hydrate and use flower food (chlorine and sugar) and store in the cold store at temperatures



between two and six degrees. We also maintain the cool chain as it is transported in refrigerated trucks and this ensures that 80 per cent of the freshness is retained in the stem when it reaches the destination.

How do you choose the suppliers to work with?

Traditionally with roses we know the suppliers so there is an established relationship there. For other flowers we meet the supplier, understand their growing practices and see their farms and then decide. We also have a proper feedback mechanism in place that helps as well. We do try and pass on our experience to the growers so we mutually benefit.

What are the ecofriendly measures in place?

Unlike other perishable products, flowers are not consumable so organically grown flowers are not something that will work as flowers need to be pest free. We do not use plastic for packaging so that helps.

What are your funding plans?

Currently it is self-funded and before



we go for funding we want to grow the business. Also it is a complex market that needs to be understood. We know this will work in India and will be a big business as there is a need for a better product and consistent quality. So we want to grow the concept first and then look at funding. We are selling 2.5 bouquets per outlet per day and we do 65 bouquets per outlet per day for the concept to work. We need to look at the next two years to understand this. We have invested in people and training and educating retailers on how the category works.