

MICHEL RENÉ

THE MARKET

Hong Kong people like to dress for success and for a fashion label to succeed in the competitive clothing market its brand must match the values of its target market.

Michel Rene is a well established Hong Kong fashion brand that provides both classic and casual city clothes for professionals, executives and office workers. It has earned a reputation for high quality European styling and good value for money.

From just one store in Hong Kong in 1977, today there are over 150 Michel Rene stores and distributing outlets in Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Japan and the PRC.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Michel Rene was the innovator who introduced ready-to-wear business clothes to the Hong Kong market. By steadily building up brand recognition in Hong Kong, the company was able to take its winning formula and translate it to different markets throughout the Greater China region.

Success in the PRC market has been achieved through the Michel Rene Franchise Program. As well as being supplied with merchandise, franchisees of Michel Rene are fully supported and advised on the brand and how to represent it in the market place with guidance on management, interior design, displays and staffing. A brand manual helps all franchisees and business partners achieve consistent branding whether stores are franchises or self-owned.

HISTORY

The Michel Rene brand was launched in Hong Kong in 1977. Having identified a growing market for stylish business wear, French designers were hired to develop a full collection of European influenced classic suits

market in Hong Kong was transformed with the development of shopping malls, Michel Rene shops were positioned in these sophisticated new centres and the brand was firmly established as a popular Hong Kong fashion label.



and casual city clothes.

Located in Miramar Shopping Arcade, Tsim Sha Tsui, the first Michel Rene store comprised two stories and measured over 6,000 square feet. At that time a large spacious shop was a novelty in Hong Kong. The grand opening in December 1977 caused considerable excitement throughout Hong Kong and was widely reported in both the Chinese and English press.

It was not just the concept of a Hong Kong owned brand making off-the-peg stylish suits for the city's executives and upwardly mobile office workers that captured attention but the fresh approach to retailing and merchandising in the stores.

The following year the company opened stores in the heart of Hong Kong's central business district as well as in Causeway Bay, the busiest shopping area in the city. Michel Rene then expanded across Hong Kong. As the economy boomed, the retail

In 1988 Michel Rene began to penetrate other markets in Greater China by opening shops in Macau and Taiwan. From its first store in Taipei the company has expanded across the city and across the island so that Michel Rene outlets are in all major Taiwanese cities.

With the opening up of the PRC market in the nineties, Michel Rene was quick to spot the potential for further expansion. The company was one of the first well-known fashion brands to move into the mainland market. In 1993 the first Michel Rene store in mainland China was opened in Guangzhou. The success of that store with southern China's rising professional classes, has paved the way for more Michel Rene shops and outlets being opened in prestigious shopping malls and department stores in Beijing, Shanghai and throughout China.

THE PRODUCT

All Michel Rene products are designed with a commitment to quality, comfort and fashion. The core of the product range is still men's and women's formal suiting. This "classic collection" comprises suits for men and women, blazers, dresses, skirts, dress shirts, dress pants and accessories.

To add value to the classic collection Michel Rene customers can "mix and match" their business wear with the company's range of casual city wear. Less formal



styling features in the fashionable range of jackets, blousons, casual pants, dresses, skirts, polo shirts, knits and T-shirts.

Michel Rene's team of designers are still influenced by European trends and most fabrics are sourced from Europe. Responding to customers' demand for easy to care for clothes, recent Michel Rene collections have included plenty of stretch, super soft and machine washable garments, plus new functional fabrics such as Aquastop and Tencel.

Product prices are firmly in the middle of the market and the brand remains the frontline of the apparel industry with its medium pricing strategy.

Diversification is essential for any modern fashion brand and Michel Rene's product lines now include accessories such as belts, hosiery, bags and underwear and a specially designed fragrance. Eyewear was added to the range in 1998 with the addition of the Michel Rene Lunettes license.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

After 20 years in the marketplace Michel Rene reviewed its logo and image in 1998. Aiming to attract a greater share of the new generation of young professionals in Hong Kong, new packaging and contemporary interior design were launched. A new shopping environment was created to increase the fun factor in the shops, with product photo albums and more mannequins to demonstrate the range of mix and match options more fully.

Finally the logo itself was updated and by the start of the new millennium the company had a fresh new look that incorporated its brand values and had rejuvenated its brand image.

The launch of the Michel Rene website www.michelrene.com.hk in 2000 provided customers with a new channel to learn more about the brand and communicate with the company more freely.



PROMOTION

Every season brings a new Michel Rene collection to introduce to the market and the company ensures exposure through extensive advertising and promotional campaigns. Advertisements in fashion and leisure magazines that appeal to Michel Rene's target market are important in increasing brand recognition among consumers.

However the company also runs advertising campaigns in less fashion orientated publications such as hotel and in-flight magazines to promote the Michel Rene brand to potential business partners or franchisees. Brand image is also maintained through outdoor advertising at some of Hong Kong's most prominent locations including major roads, MTR stations and the cross-harbour tunnel.

Below the line marketing activities such as supplying wardrobes to TV anchors and sponsoring local events have also achieved brand recognition at all levels of the market. Fashion shows at some of Hong Kong's glitzy malls bring Michel Rene right into the heart of its market while it shops. Working on trade fairs and fashion shows with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council in Hong Kong and throughout the PRC has successfully introduced Michel Rene to new markets and business opportunities overseas.

Michel Rene has a strong VIP database of 100,000 customers, which provides year round benefits and special promotional offers to its members. Co-promotions with credit cards and partner companies have also proved popular and successful.

BRAND VALUES

"Express your city life" is the tagline that inspires Michel Rene customers. They know that the brand will provide them with high quality medium priced garments with fresh styling for their professional lives.

The company believes that only by putting great effort into products,

packaging and interior design can they gain appreciation of the brand in terms of quality, details and value from customers. Research and attention to customers' preferences has enabled Michel Rene to build high brand awareness, which is rewarded by their customers' loyalty.



THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT MICHEL RENE

- The Chinese translation of Michel Rene is made up of three characters that represent a horse, a lion and a dragon - all lively and dynamic animals according to Chinese tradition
- After 25 years of trading Michel Rene has sold over 5 million suits and used 75 million buttons
- If all the Michel Rene ties ever sold were laid end to end they would reach from Hong Kong to Beijing
- Michel Rene supports many local social events and environmental campaigns

