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From humble beginnings in the corporate furniture realm to the spectacular escalation into the lifestyle giant that it is now, Otobi's story of success spans merely 35 years. Providing holistic space solutions catering to all spheres of daily life, Otobi is well on its way to rising to the ranks of Asia's top three brands by 2020. With creative reinvention pulsating through the entire organisation, Otobi has set out to revolutionise the entire retail scenario starting off with Bangladesh.

Market

Otobi controls about 80% of the country's branded furniture market at present. For the last three years, Otobi has been achieving a double-digit growth with an average of over 20% increase in year-on-year sales, despite the global economic downturn and great stagflation in FY 2007-08. In a market of over Tk 1,500 crores, the organised market is estimated to be close to Tk 500 crores. Otobi is marketing to and providing the price-sensitive customers with affordable solutions through its masstige value proposition (prestige for the mass). Otobi considers itself to be its most significant competitor, aiming to constantly break its own standards and raise the bar even higher. Otobi serves its customers and consumers through a nationwide distribution network, including over 400 retail outlets, exclusive dealers and franchises.

Achievement

Over the years, Otobi's excellence has been recognised by the Bangladeshi community and has been awarded numerous accolades. Otobi was pronounced Enterprise of the Year at the Bangladesh Business Awards in 2001. At the Dhaka Export Fair, Otobi won the 1st Prize for its Stall in 1981, and 1st Prize for its Pavilion in 1982, 1983, and 1985. The National Industrial Fair awarded Otobi with 1st Prize for its Pavilion in 1990 and 1995. At the Dhaka International Trade Fair, Otobi won the 1st Prize for its Pavilion in 1996, 1998 and 2001, and the 2nd Prize for its Pavilion in 1997 and 2004. Finally, Bangladesh Brand Forum acknowledged Otobi's Excellence in Communication in 2009 with the Commward.

Product

Otobi has a vision to develop into a complete

lifestyle brand offering innovative and inspiring space solutions. Otobi's range of furniture, furnishings and appliances are developed and marketed to serve all ages and stages of homes, industries, institutions, hospitals and offices. Otobi manufactures furniture from an assortment of materials, including laminated chip boards, wood, MDF, sheet metal, tubes, plastic, cane and many more. Our wide range of furniture and fittings are segmented category-wise and encompass areas such as bedrooms, children's rooms, dining rooms, living rooms, study rooms, kitchens, hospitals, educational institutions, corporate offices, industrial accents and decors and retail stores among others. Otobi boasts an assortment of about 1,100 generic stock keeping units, and a total of over 5,000 stock keeping units.

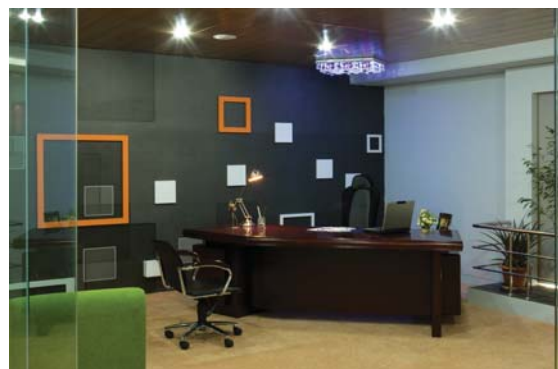
The company implements all possible global best practices in manufacturing supply chain management and retailing, ensuring all products and services offered are of supreme quality. For instance, Otobi's business research department conducts extensive surveys and interviews to determine customers' responses to Otobi's endeavours, and this feedback is incorporated to modify and diversify the existing

product line and make it even more alluring to consumers. An additional interior department has been established to assist offices with implementing complete interior solutions to meet consumers' overall needs.

Otobi is completely committed to the environment, and keeps solid wood furniture as low as 5% of the complete product range. The boards used are imported from quality board manufacturers who comply with environment-friendly policies.

Recent Development

Otobi has undergone major changes under the new management. The organizational structure has been modified to include Portfolio Management, Category Management and Visual Merchandising departments, which sets Otobi apart from other companies. In 2008, Otobi's unique Lal-Foring Istishan was launched to cater to the needs of the firm's young customers. In terms of management technique, Otobi introduced the Balanced Scorecard system which aligns the organization's strategic decisions to the work accomplished by its employees. Otobi's first wood plant was established in 2008 as well, in addition to the existing two factories, which is a significant achievement for the company. In 2009, a breakthrough collection dubbed "the complete office solution" was inaugurated under the sub-brand Notepad. A major achievement for Otobi this past year was the launch of the groundbreaking Otobi website. The website had been inactive for a very long time and the company refused to put up a website that was below the Otobi standard. The concept that was eventually developed sets a benchmark in the field with its thematic, interactive and completely distinct nature.



As a part of Otobi's commitment to the environment, the company has launched a nationwide Go Green program under the leadership of freedom fighter Mr Abdul Khalek. Through this project, school students are engaged in the plantation program, and are taught to love plants and nurture them, and are encouraged to make the dream of a cleaner, greener Bangladesh a reality.

Promotion

The in-house Communication department at Otobi works around the clock to ensure that all of Otobi's products, services and promotional campaigns receive due attention.

Otobi maintains innovative, year-round promotional excitement to attract its customers and is visually present in print media, television and outdoor billboards. The promotion strategy has evolved over the years, alongside the brand. In the past, Otobi employed straightforward, product-based adverts in above-the-line channels. It has moved on to discount campaigns since, and has developed further into thematic campaigns. A comparison of figures demonstrating Otobi's actual ad spending in the past with figures representing the present will substantiate the evolution of Otobi's media presence. In FY 2004-05, the company spent a total of Tk 24,458,000 on advertising, while in the last fiscal year, FY 2008-2009, Otobi spent Tk 86,333,201. This drastic increment in advertising expenses has a direct relationship with the increase in sales and traffic flow in the showrooms.

In terms of below-the-line advertising, Otobi is involved in a number of activities including direct mails, leaflets, catalogues, scratch cards and coupons, PR activation for showroom launches, B2B sales, and follow up of the product condition by the Otobi Customer Care department. The Business Research department is also involved in BTL activities, by measuring the level of customer satisfaction after sales.

A recent campaign which received much acclamation was the Metamorphosis TVC, which illustrates various types of transformations taking place within a jungle. The campaign was launched in August 2009, and is being aired on all Bangladeshi channels. Otobi depicted seven layers of meaning in this campaign: its outer shell introduced solid wood furniture and its innermost shell appropriated an essence of continuous reinvention. Within the

intermediary shells, Otobi gathers inspiration from nature and considers Otobian life as a garden or forest. Life goes on for travellers who gain motivation and enlightenment from their journeys for their own metamorphosis.

While advertising and promotions are an integral part of the company's function, Otobi recognises the role it can play in furthering the development process in the country. Otobi is committed to giving back to the society it operates in, with an emphasis on a triple bottom line: people, planet, profit. The company has stepped forward to actively respond to the needs of the public on numerous occasions, and CSR policies centre on



aiding people in need, victims of natural disasters, and supporting the development of meritorious students. A few incidents where Otobi came to the fore without hesitation include:

- A contribution worth Tk 5,00,000 as flood relief in 2007
- A contribution worth Tk 5,00,000 for victims of Cyclone Sidr in 2008
- A contribution worth Tk 9,66,238 to IBA in 2008
- A contribution worth Tk 10,05,000 to Shahjalal University of Science and Technology in Sylhet
- A contribution worth Tk 1,26,000 to the Bangladesh Shishu Kishore Mela
- A contribution worth Tk 10,00,000 to the Kidney Foundation

Otobi also sponsored the winners' cash prizes at the Meridian Channel i Khudey Gaanraaj in 2009.

In addition to these, Otobi has launched a Go Green program under the leadership of freedom fighter Mr Abdul Khalek. As Go Green Ambassador, Mr Khalek has taken charge of the nationwide tree plantation program, starting with young students in the first phase, at various schools

in Sylhet and Bogra, aiming for a cleaner, greener Bangladesh.

Brand Values

Embedded in day to day affairs is Otobi's aspiration to be a creative "we" organisation in every sense of the term. It is with teamwork and togetherness that challenges are met and overcome.

Creation, perfection and dynamism are the core values of Otobi. Quality, durability, excellence and neat craftsmanship are not what Otobi strives to achieve, but features eminent in each Otobi design. The company maintains its belief of setting its own benchmark and breaking it time and time again. Embodying continuous innovation, Otobi is now an inspirational brand in homes and offices, which is explicitly expressed through its products and communication.

At the heart of all activities in the company lies an innate need to constantly surprise; not just the consumers, but Otobians too! The company thrives on the unique "keep reinventing" proposition.

Things you didn't know

- Otobi means forest and is a Bengali word used by Bangladesh's revered poet Rabindranath Tagore;
- Otobi manufactures its furniture using state-of-the-art technology, such as computerized numerically controlled machines and solar kilns;
- Otobi employs over 5,000 people, including over 200 graduate engineers and business graduates (MBA, BBA). Every year, Otobi takes 100 to 200 of its employees to a five star hotel to exercise the 'One Otobi, One World' belief system, where the Chief Executive Officer and the junior-most Executives are equally treated;
- Otobi is dedicated to incorporating global best practices in day-to-day affairs. Departments like Category Management, Portfolio Management, Communication and Brand Management have been introduced in order to cater to the needs of Otobi's customers more specifically. Otobi also makes use of flexible manufacturing, merchandising and assortment planning, key account management, MRP 1 & 2 and SAP, which are crucial to the smooth operation of production and retail functions;
- Otobi values its employees, and takes their concerns into consideration with an annual Employee Satisfaction survey.

History

1975

With an opening capital of just Tk 5,000, Nitun Kundu starts The Designers in a tiny house in Shukrabad, Dhaka. Later, it is renamed Art in Craft.

2007

Otobi is present in seven cities in India through distributors and dealers, strengthening its position as Bangladesh's first global company.

1984

Art in Craft is renamed Otobi. It moves into its first 75,000 sq ft factory in Mirpur, Dhaka.

2008

Otobi launches the vibrant Lal-Foring Istishan to cater to its young customer base.

1998

Otobi opens its first exclusive dealer in Chittagong. Otobi starts producing completely knocked down panel furniture - the first in Bangladesh.

2009

Otobi launches Notepad, an innovative range of contemporary office furniture.

2002

Otobi's first ERP goes live.

2004

Otobi reaches every district of Bangladesh with eight showrooms and 100 dealers. Otobi starts exporting to India on a regular basis, making it the first Bangladeshi company to become global. Otobi builds its flagship 42,000 sq ft retail store in Gulshan, Dhaka.

2006

A new leadership under the guidance of Animesh Kundu as MD and Sabbir Hasan Nasir as CEO takes over from founder Nitun Kundu, resulting in a revolution in business practices and strategies. Nitun Kundu becomes Chairman of the Board of Directors.