

Blackberrys to take biz to offshore markets

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THE TWO decades old domestic premium menswear brand Blackberrys is going international. The company is firming up its export plans to foray into the international market by 2014.

"The domestic market is headed to plateau off in the next two-three years with average industry growth stabilising at around 15-20 per cent. Hence, we are now firming up our export plans with initial focus on countries in the SAARC region as it would require very little tweaking to suit their preferences," says Dhruv Tiwari, vice-president (marketing), Blackberrys, told *Financial Chronicle*.

The company has unveiled its Summer/Spring Collection 2012 for exclusive preview to its dealers and hopes that 60 per cent of the orders would be generated from this bi-annual event.

According to Tiwari, the Blackberrys brand promoted by Milan Chhabra would embark on a dual expansion strategy in international markets with focus on both company-owned showrooms and distribution channels once the brand is launched globally.

Last year, the premium menswear industry valued



Venturing out

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at Rs 4,500 crore, registered a growth of 22 per cent. Other brands in menswear include Louis Philippe, Van Heusen, Zudio and Armani. This is 12.5 per cent of the overall domestic menswear industry estimated at Rs 36,000 crore per annum.

The company is shifting focus from metros in tier II and tier III cities and towns as it plans to virtually double its turnover from Rs 350 crore in 2010-11 to Rs 650 crore this fiscal. It is planning to open 40 stores this fiscal, mostly in the smaller towns. Blackberrys at present has 21 franchise stores, 34 company-owned showrooms and is present

in over 300 multi-brand outlets.

"Earlier, 70 per cent of our business was from metros. But with smaller towns emerging as manufacturing hubs, their contribution to overall sales is rising and we expect that in the next two years smaller towns will contribute virtually 60 per cent to our total sales," Tiwari said.

With rapid changes in consumer fashion preferences, the company is also expanding its designer base. It now has 20 designers, 10 each in the creative and technical categories.

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