

H&M in India: Realizing A Global Design Concept

H&M's first flagship store in India opens in full glory of its global store design concept. The store's stunning ambience and presentation has been achieved to offer customers the complete H&M experience at the prestigious South Delhi mall Select Citywalk, Saket. This was achieved with a combination of imported shop-fit material and local shop-build managed professionally by reputed agencies who complied with the global quality standards of H&M on-site in men, material and management. VM&RD gets a glimpse into what went behind the realization of a global store design concept in the Indian marketplace.



After months of anticipation and publicity build-up in the media, Swedish fashion giant H&M (Hennes & Mauritz) opened its first flagship store at the prestigious South Delhi mall Select Citywalk, Saket to a tremendous response from eager fashionista fans. The 25000 sq ft store is spread across two levels featuring women's wear on the ground floor and men's, kids and infant wear on the first. The store uses its latest global flagship store design concept launched recently in markets like Australia, Macau, Peru, Philippines and the US to name a few. H&M exists in 61 countries with over 3,700 stores and is ranked the second largest

global clothing retailer, just behind Inditex and leads over the third largest Gap Inc. Incidentally, all three of them are in the same mall!

The store offers a great assortment of global young fashion designs for women, men, teenagers and children with unbeatable value for money, all created from their in-house design studio. Their high fashion designs are presented in their stores with superb styling and visual merchandising in clusters of stylised mannequins that are highlighted boldly in the clean, chic and contemporary store environment providing

a great environment for inspiring fashion shopping.

VM&RD takes a look at what went behind this impeccable realization in terms of men, material and management. Firstly, H&M ensured that the store-build, fit-out and presentation quality were uncompromised by using a combination of imported fit-out material and carefully selecting certified local partners-Fitch Studios India as their store design partner and Kalpakaaru Projects Private Limited as their store build and fit-out partner. The brand also qualified its vendor partners in India through their due internal

diligence of identifying those who adhered to strict ethical and system compliance to its stringent norms, while building the outlet from bid-to-build phases of project.

VM&RD chatted with Surajit Chaudhuri, Managing Director, Kalpakaaru Projects Pvt Ltd, the principal Indian agency behind the set-up of the H&M store. A veteran with over 20 years of experience in the shop fitting industry, he has delivered large format stores in India such as Marks & Spencer, Debenhams among other marquee brands.

Mock-shops were developed for approval of the H&M's build and construct teams at the Kalpakaaru manufacturing facility and engineering studio of 1,00,000 sq. ft. at Greater Noida to ensure the stringent expectation in quality of finishes were achieved. Having expertise in delivering retail stores for international brands of similar categories, Kalpakaaru could deliver the project successfully in about 16 weeks. The key requirement was of a robust project management systems that ensured compliance both with stringent H&M quality and specification deliverable and also with the norms and regulations required by local and mall authorities.

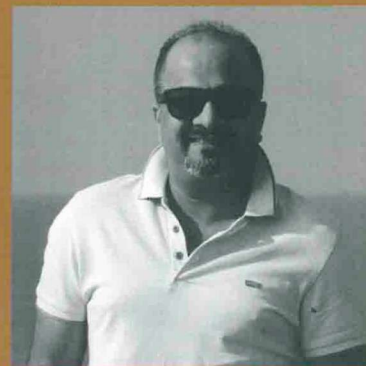
"The project apart from being monitored by multiple internal agencies on a daily basis and as mentioned earlier, incorporated the collaborative planning and lean build processes. This application was possible through the expert assistance of our UK based consultants along with the H&M team members. The synchronization and implementation of the above methodology ensured minimum wastage of the productivity in relation to the human resources on site apart from the materials consumed (on site raw material requirements) while realizing this store," explained Surajit.

H&M monitored the shop build and fit-out with a process that had their international construction team visiting India regularly in close coordination with the India construction team to ensure meeting the time lines across the build phases laid down in the very detailed store development programme. They also ensured, at regular intervals, that all build and fit-out teams followed stringent quality norms before the final handover of the store to the operations team.

"We ensured both our procurement and on-site teams, which includes site engineering and build teams, followed strict compliance to the specification given by the brand and



"Although the brand has used imported fixtures and lighting for their outlet as per their own global standards, most of the material procurement and engineering are done locally. Localization also means we went through a stringent approval process from the build and construct team of H&M. We also ensured that certain build materials were procured through H&M specified vendors to sustain global standards expected".

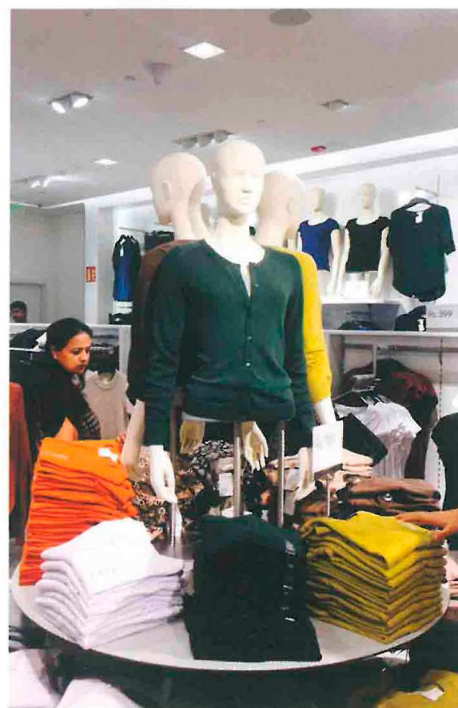


Surajit Chaudhuri, Managing Director, Kalpakaaru Projects Pvt Ltd

there was no compromise on deliverables," affirmed Bobby Koothur, Executive Director, Kalpakaaru Projects Private Limited.

All the fit-out items like fixtures, lighting, flooring and visual merchandising elements were 100% imported by H&M from overseas and Kalpakaaru was assigned the responsibility of ensuring the management of the logistics and precise installation on site as per detailed drawing instructions from by Fitch Studio India. To enable the build and fit-out there were around 120 members from multiple agencies who helped deliver the fabulous store in 16 weeks.

A look into what went behind the building of this store does give valuable insightful pointers for the Indian retail design, build and fit-out industry on how a professional competent team, robust systems for project management, uncompromising quality and





"The other very important highlight of this project has been the strict adherence to health and safety guidelines. We believe that this project has raised the bar in lieu of the level of quality and deliverables for future retail projects in India"

**Bobby Koothur, Executive Director,
Kalpakaaru Projects Pvt Ltd**



commitment of compliance can collaborate and converge into the realization of a truly international fashion destination. Kudos to the H&M team and their partners in India!

H&M plans for its first couple of stores to have fixtures, store lighting systems and VM elements fully imported, to adhere to their international norms and standards, post which they will probably explore alternate agencies closer while the build and construct of the store would continue to be undertaken through their panel of reputed and professionally managed agencies.

H&M's is now planning its second store in the country slated to open in Delhi's Ambience mall, Vasant Kunj and the third in Bangalore.

**Satarupa Chakraborty &
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