

Uniqlo opens flagship store as CEO eyes omni-channel potentials

LAST month, Tadashi Yanai, chairman, president and CEO of Fast Retailing, which owns the Uniqlo apparel brand, was in Singapore to grace the opening of the company's first Global Flagship Store for South-east Asia and Singapore.

Opening the store in Singapore is strategic, he said during a Q&A session with the press a day before the official opening last month. Singapore is a gateway to the pan-pacific and beyond, he added, so the new store will cater not only to the local market but to other customers from the region as well.

The new store, which is located at Orchard Central and sports the theme "U+S and The World", is showcasing the brand's full assortment of LifeWear — innovative, high-quality clothing that is universal in design and comfort, and made for anyone, anywhere. The new store spans three levels and covers 2,700sqm in sales floor space.

But while Uniqlo is increasing its bricks-and-mortar presence in the region, Fast Retailing's Yanai told RETAIL ASIA, that the company is also looking into adopting omni-channel retailing. Omni-channel is becoming big in Asia, he said, and the lines are already blurring. Currently, the company's e-commerce efforts are at



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30% with the remaining 70% still tied to bricks-and-mortar operations. In South-east Asia, Uniqlo's e-commerce platform is available in Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand. Yanai said that while the company wishes to make Uniqlo's e-commerce more far-reaching, he stressed the need to choose reliable partners to make Uniqlo's omni-channel plans grow.

For now, in its new bricks-and-mortar abode, Uniqlo fans in the region can expect a new shopping experience, thanks to the combination of the in-store design, full product line-up and visually stunning displays. According to the company, even the elegant dark wood floors that evoke the mood of Singapore and South-east Asia are intended to help create the proper setting for the largest product line-up anywhere in the region.

Iconic rotating mannequins will also be an integral part of Uniqlo Orchard Central, as well as close to 300 digital displays, the largest number anywhere in the Uniqlo world, and a total of 350 in-store mannequins, the latter matching the Uniqlo Ginza Global Flagship Store in Tokyo.



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"Uniqlo Orchard Central will be a unique store for the region, providing a new shopping experience for customers," said Taku Morikawa, CEO, Uniqlo Southeast Asia. "With its vibrant creative scene, Singapore is the ideal location for us to showcase our LifeWear concept through the eyes of the local community. We hope that through our work with highly dedicated Singaporean individuals and groups, we will be able to turn this space into a platform where creative ideas can be expressed and shared with others." **ra**



Taku Morikawa (left), CEO, Uniqlo Southeast Asia, and Fast Retailing CEO Tadashi Yanai during the Q&A session with the press prior to the store's opening.