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Spencer's goes for image makeover

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Spencer's Retail, the Rs 800-crore retail arm of the RPG Group, will expand its range of fashion merchandise with the launch of private labels as well as foreign apparel brands, in an attempt to revamp its image as a fashion-centric brand instead of just a food retail chain.

"We have always been known as a food and retailing brand. We now intend to change our image and tap the fashion segment as well," Samar Singh Sheikawat, vice-president (marketing), Spencer's Retail, said.

Currently, the sale of fashion merchandise makes up 10 per cent of the total revenues of Spencer's Retail. "We expect sale of fashion merchandise to contribute 25-30 per cent to the overall revenues by the end of March 2009, when the company will have a turnover of Rs 2,000 crore," Sheikawat said.

Spencer's fashion offerings will be positioned as 'affordable', with prices in the range of Rs 199 to Rs 1,000.

To begin with, the fashion merchandise will be available only in Spencer's large-format stores. It will allocate 25 per cent of the 25,000 to 70,000 sq



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ft space in such stores to fashion merchandise, up from 10 per cent now.

The company will introduce its private labels in apparels, like Island Monks (casual wear for men and women), Mark Nicolas (formal wear), Scorez (sportswear), Detailz (basic wear), Asankhya (ethnic and fusion wear), Puddles (for children up to two years of age) and Little Devils (for children between 2 and 14 years).

Spencer's will also launch private labels in fashion accessories under the brand U n I, comprising bag, junk jewellery, leather items, belts, etc, as well as footwear brand Mark Nicolas for men and women. It will also launch larger sizes for plus-sized adults.

The company is restructur-

ing its marketing team to include more designers and people with experience in fashion merchandise retailing. "The designers will be selected from design schools in India, while the manufacturing will be handled by third-party contract manufacturers," Sheikawat said.

Going forward, Spencer's also plans to host fashion shows of the stature of 'Lakme Fashion Week' or 'Wills Fashion Week'.

Apart from its private labels, the firm is also looking at bringing two apparel brands from the UK and the US to India this year, one of which will be for children and the other for grown-ups. Both the brands will be allotted close to 2,500 sq ft each and will be retailed in a shop-in-shop environment inside Spencer's large-format stores.