

## Satisfying the Fetish for Brands

Written by Chris Fernando  
Friday, 23 March 2012 12:09 -

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Raj Iyer, the CMD and Founder of Brandsfetish, says that the enormous market potential that India presents for designer fashion goods at privileged prices led him to launching [www.brandsfetish.com](http://www.brandsfetish.com). Today, the website is exclusively dedicated to designer apparel and luxury goods at attractive price tags. Brandsfetish.com is a website that is exclusively dedicated at selling designer apparel and luxury goods online. The online shopping portal was launched out of the urge for catering to the growing needs of working youngsters in India. Raj Iyer, the CMD and Founder of Brandsfetish.com, is a Marketing Management graduate with several years of rich corporate experience behind his back.

Somewhere down the line around 1999, the entrepreneurship bug bit him and he forayed in to the IT services domain which is now 300+ strong and going on good. Prior to starting Brandsfetish.com he also had forayed into the hospitality industry and that went off well exceeding his expectations. The next step was launching Acumen Solutions with the company's first portal [www.groopoffers.com](http://www.groopoffers.com), a group buying site, which broke even around 16 months ago.

The company's initial intention was to offer designer apparel and luxury goods on the Groopoffers.com platform. However, a survey conducted amongst Groopoffers.com's registered members, inner circle and vendors made Acumen Solutions launch Brandsfetish.com, which according to Iyer is a one stop exclusive fashion hub for all the top designer brands – both Indian and international with discounts ranging up to 90% off on retail prices.

### **Coming Back to the Idea**

So how did Iyer latch on to the idea of launching a portal that could sell branded apparel and accessories? "Well to gauge the response, we initially introduced a few designer labels on Groopoffers.com at heavily reduced prices and the response was extraordinary," added Iyer. "This confirmed our belief of the enormous market potential of designer fashion goods at privileged prices which led us to launching Brandsfetish.com. The website today is exclusively dedicated to selling designer apparel and luxury goods at exciting prices."

Brandsfetish.com is a very young brand, having been launched only a couple of months ago. The strength of the human resource is 30 for now. The company is based out of Mumbai with operations in Ahmedabad, too. "We have tie ups with all the top distributors in India as well as in

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USA and Europe for international designer brands,” explained Iyer. “Though currently there are no plans to enter into a brick and mortar outlet model with our brand, mobile commerce is definitely something we are looking at.” The company is currently developing applications for smartphones running on iOS, Blackberry and Android.

### **Any Roadblocks?**

Iyer believes that the ecommerce industry is more of a learning curve and you learn a lot along the way. “All assumptions and predictions you have can easily be thrown out of the window. It took us sometime to realise and understand the market trends and what makes the buyer tick,” added Iyer. “However excellent product quality, great prices, instant customer support and quick deliveries are the most critical aspects in flourishing your online business. However even though every entrepreneur knows all this it is easier said than done.”

Initially, Iyer said, the Co-Founders of the company were also attending to emails and calling customers personally since the company was short on manpower. “However while some customers appreciated talking to the owners directly, others were not so appreciative of the same. So it’s a mixed bag,” added Iyer. “Another was online marketing. We initially burnt a good amount of cash on most of the various options thrown at us and almost 80% of the avenues did not yield the desired results or rather the promised results. All in all we are now very clear on what works and the experience has been very beneficial.”

Iyer further claimed that today everyone wants to look good and wear good to feel good. According to him, the Indian economy is booming. “We are next to none now and the Indian growth and surge story is very well known now. Disposable incomes have shot through the roof and we Indians are very knowledgeable about the latest fashion trends and international labels,” explained Iyer. “Our sole aim and purpose is to present the latest authentic international designer brands and trends at exclusively privileged prices.”

According to Iyer, though these are the early days since the launch of Brandsfetish.com, the website is seeing a healthy number of unique visitors and sales daily, even without any advertisement backing. The website currently has cash on delivery (COD) payment option and Iyer said his company is exploring an option for integrating the EMI (every month installment) option as well into the payment system. “Though we have been boot strapped from scratch, we are in talks with a few investors for funding. Liquidity is very vital in this field of expertise,” said Iyer.

### **The More the Merrier**

Is Iyer worried about competition in the Indian market? “Well I firmly believe in the adage, ‘The more the merrier.’ The Indian market is massive and growing incredibly quick so there is a lot of space for many more,” explained Iyer. “Our USP is that we only feature products straight from the manufacturer where possible or from their authorised distributors. A large percentage of our international brands are sourced from the USA and Europe. This combined with privileged prices will make us a very strong and capable player.”

Iyer added that at the end of it, it all boils down to how satisfied a customer is with the product quality, the price and dealing with your company. “If you have taken care of that, rest assured

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the customer will keep coming back to you. Problems may and do occur beyond your control – but at that time if a customer realises that this company is going all out to stand by him and satisfy his requirement to the fullest, that’s half the battle won. Word of mouth is a very precious commodity,” added Iyer.