

THE STATUS OF LUXURY TALENT IN INDIA

Manpower in the Indian luxury sector tremendously lags behind in performance. Here's a report on the nuances of manpower training in this sector, and how training programmes will help to overcome this problem.

According to a report by AT Kearney, India is the second-fastest growing economy after China, with its luxury market estimated to touch \$15bn by 2015. Its size is also expected to quadruple by 2025, making India the fifth largest consumer market by then. However, an important factor that is obstructing India from becoming one of the best luxury retail markets in the world is the lack of properly-trained manpower in this sector.

PROBLEMS AFFECTING GROWTH:

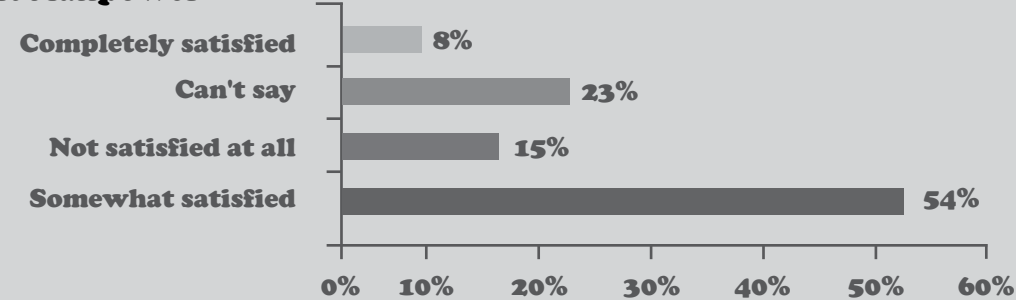
Most of the current manpower in the luxury trade has moved from mass to premium to luxury brands without receiving any luxury-specific education or training. Even though there has been progress in the Indian luxury retail sector, there is still room for improvement.

The facts that 69.2% of firm owners would want to hire professionals who are specifically trained in luxury brands, and 53.8% of company heads/brand owners are willing to invest in luxury training and education programmes for their employees speak of the scope in this sector.

In India, manpower performance is majorly affected by four main factors:

- Lack of product knowledge
- Lack of understanding of luxury standards
- Lack of dedicated luxury education and training, and
- Lack of luxury outlook.

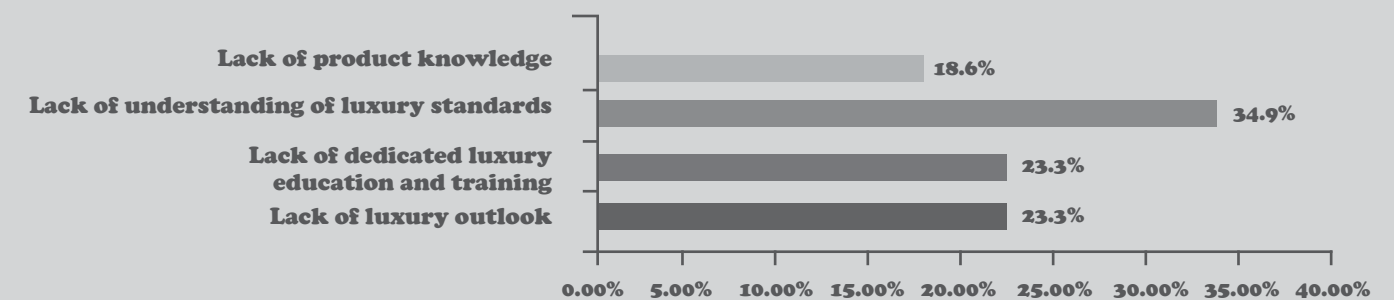
Current Manpower



▲ As per a survey conducted by Luxury Connect, a luxury specialist company, among CEOs of luxury firms, working luxury professionals, brand owners and fashion students on the status of luxury talent in India, surprisingly, 54% of the top managers in luxury firms find the performance of their manpower somewhat satisfactory while 15% of them are not satisfied at all.



Problem areas with current manpower



▲ CEOs and brand owners cited lack of understanding of luxury standards as the most important factor affecting the growth of desired service standards on shop floors.

TOP LUXURY COURSES AND INSTITUTES

As companies and individuals are fast recognising the dearth of non-trained manpower in the luxury sector, many are willing to take that extra step for their own professional good and are thus taking up courses. 'Luxury Brand Management' has emerged as the most preferred course to take by the surveyed, while 'Marketing and PR', 'Buying and Merchandising', and 'Retail Operation Management' followed in ranking.

These courses help one gain a holistic understanding and knowledge of the business in the fashion or luxury market. Students who are pursuing fashion courses in India are more than willing to travel abroad for higher studies, and definitely for luxury courses.

The major reason for this is better exposure to the fashion and luxury world, and the fact that institutes abroad have better curriculum and better placement facilities in this sector.

Italy, USA and UK are the top three most preferred destinations for these courses. Renowned school names such as SDA Bocconi School of Management, Istituto Marangoni in Milan, Polimoda in Florence, ESSEC Business School in Paris and London College of Fashion emerged as the most popular institutes among Indian students and professionals.

Acknowledging this dire need for trained professionals in the luxury trade, Luxury Connect LLP organises Executive Training Programmes on Luxury Brand Management in collaboration with SDA Bocconi School of Management, and Luxury Customer Experience Management Program with Jean Claude Roustant, ex-LVMH Training Director.

Given the recent development of the Luxury Connect Business School, customised training programmes have been formalised with long-term programmes on various luxury courses in the pipeline.

(The above article is a summarised and edited version of the survey "The Status of Luxury Talent in India" conducted by Luxury Connect Consultancy and Research Wing.)

Disclaimer: The research and analysis of this Luxury Retail Report is based on information received from various students and professionals in the Indian Luxury Product and Services Sector primarily through a research survey. Respondent category was also extended to brand owners or their key senior executives of up to CEO level. While efforts have been made to ensure that all the information and facts provided in this research report are authentic, Luxury Connect Consultancy and Research Wing accept no responsibility for any errors or omissions in such references.)