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## US Footwear major Skechers steps into apparel, accessories

**To open 500 stores in India in 5 years**

American footwear major Skechers aims to have 500 stores in India in three-five years.

The company, which has been growing at a fast clip in the past five years, is also entering the Indian apparel and accessories categories.

Marvin Bernstein, Managing Partner, Skechers S.a.r.l, told BusinessLine that India is one of the fast-growing markets for the brand.

“I believe we haven’t even scratched the surface when it comes to the potential in India. We haven’t even begun to tap the huge opportunity that is there in the tier-I and II cities. We see India to be in the top five markets in the long term but it’s difficult to give a timeline,” he said.

“We saw 100 per cent growth last year. We are focused on exposing the brand to more people in the country

and strengthening our distribution,” he added.

Skechers India’s current revenues are pegged at Rs. 450 crore.

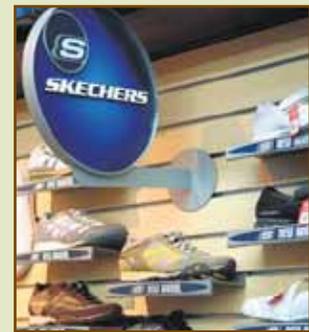
Future growth will depend on the pace at which the company manages to ramp up its distribution and add new stores, said Bernstein.

### Standalone store

The company opened its 90<sup>th</sup> standalone store in Gurugram last week. The launch also marked its foray into the apparel segment in India.

The company plans to expand its offerings in India to accessories such as socks, bags, caps and shoecare products.

Bernstein said the planned 500 stores will be a mix of company-owned and franchise-owned outlets. Skechers’ products are also sold across multi-brand stores.





The company entered India in 2012 through a joint venture with Kishore Biyani-led Future Group.

Last year, it got FIPB clearance for single-brand retail and increased its stake in the joint venture to 51 per cent.

Skechers is at present largely importing its products.

Asked if it plans to make India a manufacturing hub, Bernstein said it is not a top priority at the moment.

(Source: Business Line)

## Michael Kors bags Jimmy Choo for \$1.2bn

Michael Kors has picked out some new shoes to go with its handbags.

On Tuesday, Michael Kors said it had agreed to buy the shoe company Jimmy Choo for 896 million pounds, or about \$1.2 billion, the latest push by an American high-end fashion house to find sources of growth in an increasingly competitive retail landscape.

Many upscale brands like Michael Kors have faced plummeting sales and tepid profits. Mall traffic in North America has declined sharply, while

shoppers who have traditionally been loyal to the so-called middle market have gravitated toward brands at extremes of the style and price spectrum.

The trends have played well for e-commerce giants like Amazon, fast-fashion

Jimmy Choo, which shot to prominence thanks to celebrity patrons like Princess Diana and the 'Sex and the City' star Sarah Jessica Parker, could give Michael Kors a new avenue for growth brands like H&M and Zara, and luxury houses like Gucci. But it has left companies like Michael Kors — once the runaway leader of the "accessible luxury market" — exposed.

Jimmy Choo, which shot to prominence thanks to celebrity patrons like Princess Diana and the "Sex and the City" star Sarah Jessica Parker, could give Michael Kors a new avenue for growth. Though both brands are red-carpet favourites, they appeal to different segments of the population.

Michael Kors, known for fashion-forward designs and competitive prices, is heavily reliant on outlets and department stores, where deep discounting is common. Leather



purses sell for as little as \$70 and handbags are available for \$95.

Jimmy Choo occupies a higher price point: Open-toe slip-on sandals sell for \$425, while crystal-encrusted shoes with the brand's signature sky-high stilettos go for nearly \$3,000. The brand not only brings a different range of customers, but also hefty profit margins and an upmarket aura.

The deal for Jimmy Choo came just months after Coach agreed to a \$2.4-billion deal to buy the American handbag and accessories brand Kate Spade, apparently hoping that the combination of two affordable luxury brands could help it carve out new territory in a crowded market. Coach acquired its own upmarket shoemaker, Stuart Weitzman, in 2015.

Michael Kors is in need of an update. The brand became a household name thanks to its charismatic and eponymous founder, who appeared for 10 seasons as a judge on the fashion-based reality television show "Project Runway."

(Source: The Times of India)

## Get drenched in fashion

Bata brings to you the trendiest gumboots to rock the monsoon look in

pop-colours of pink, blue and black. These are designed in calf length for easy slip-on to keep you safe from puddle splashes. Given a shiny finish, these are perfect to be worn with your outfits like dresses, skirts or paired with denims. It is priced at Rs. 999 and available at Bata stores.



(Source: The Sunday Statesman)

## Amazon launches affordable fashion accessories label

E-commerce giant Amazon has unveiled its latest venture in the quest for retail domination — a new private-label accessories line aimed at providing an affordable alternative for shoes and handbags.

The brand, dubbed simply "The Fix", is reportedly based on designer-level trends, and will change on a monthly basis as opposed to seasonally, with handbags beginning at US \$49 and shoes starting at US\$69.

The initial launch collection - which went live Tuesday - is said to include



satin slides, fashion sneakers, studded flats, colourful mules, platforms and floral-embellished boots, among other looks.



Commenting on the launch and the label's target market, Amazon Fashion's director Kate Dimmock said: "Our customer is really looking for a great hit of style - something that's on-trend. They have an accessible price point and are well made. That was really a challenge. We are all about a breadth of selection, it's really a key part of Amazon's identity, and another key aspect for us with new styles releasing monthly."

(Source: Daily News and Analysis)

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