

L'ORÉAL INDIA

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CORPORATE BROCHURE



L'ORÉAL

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Few consumer brands are better known than those of the L'Oréal Group. The portfolio of 23 global brands including household names such as Maybelline, Garnier and Biotherm, as well as the L'Oréal Paris brand itself, are all at the forefront of their market, whether it be for cosmetics, skin care, fragrance or hair care.

Headquartered in Paris, L'Oréal has over a hundred years' experience in bringing out the best in women of all ages and races. Today, the group has a presence in 130 countries and its 65,000 employees were behind sales of €17.5 billion last year.

The L'Oréal Group cares about more than making women beautiful. Vishal Sahgal, industrial director of the Pune manufacturing facility, talks to Jayne Alverca about the importance of promoting sustainable development





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L'Oréal's presence in India dates back to 1994. "L'Oréal has a strong belief in the value of manufacturing close to its markets," explains Vishal Sahgal, industrial director of the company's Pune manufacturing facility.

However, India did not begin a programme of liberalisation for foreign companies until the early 1990s, so at first, manufacturing was undertaken by a sub-contractor. "In 1998 we were finally able to move into direct production, driven by the belief that no one has more expertise than L'Oréal in the manufacture of the products that we are famous for," he adds.

Sales of L'Oréal products in India have been meteoric. "We not only give products that are better in terms of quality and safety, we have also been instrumental in creating new markets. For example, hair colouration was revolutionised by L'Oréal when we introduced fashion shades which women had never used before. Our Colour Naturals brand is very accessible, costing close to €2, and it offers an international quality standard that was never available before. Similarly, we introduced Indian consumers to conditioners for the first time and they have quickly taken over from traditional hair oils," he comments.

Since 2004, manufacturing for hair care, hair colour and skin care lines for L'Oréal's Consumer Products division and Professional Products division has taken place at Pune. "We need to attract and retain the best talent in order to grow; and our first location was simply too remote," Sahgal explains. "Pune is where all our operations are now based and we have up to 600 people working for us at any one time."

Sahgal explains that promoting sustainable development is a fundamental tenet within all plants and distribution centres that operate under L'Oréal's umbrella. Environmental sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR) are the twin pillars that support this broader aim. Even within the vigorous framework that all L'Oréal manufacturing centres operate, Sahgal believes that the achievements of the manufacturing facility at Pune are something special. "Our Pune factory stands out within the group for its environmental achievements," he asserts. "The state government of Maharashtra where we are based awarded the Pune factory first prize in the Excellence in Energy Management category in 2009 for its various energy conservation projects."

Within the L'Oréal Group, the Pune site has won a number of accolades. "We won the internal award for the best environmental project in 2007 for a project that involved using 320 solar cells, rather than expensive diesel oil, to heat water for washing in our processes. Two years later, we again picked up first prize for a project that uses vermin culture to convert chemical sludge into useful fertiliser. This led to the proportion of waste being recovered from the site to increase from 95 per cent to 99 per cent," he says.

At corporate level, the company's Indian headquarters in Mumbai has achieved a rare synergy between its core business, which is beauty and good citizenship. A project aptly named 'Beautiful Beginnings', which is implemented together with the French NGO Aide et Action, aims to help girls from marginalised communities who were unable to complete their normal education

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to train as beauty therapists and achieve financial independence. "It is expensive and quite complex to organise so it is done centrally, but at present 'Beautiful Beginnings' is operating in Mumbai, Pune and Hyderabad and it represents wonderful opportunity for the girls involved," he says.

L'Oréal also believes that the world needs science and science needs women. The L'Oréal India For Young Women in Science scholarships programme, with the support of the Indian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO, has helped young women passionate about science to achieve their dreams and aspirations of

pursuing a career in science. Established in 2003, it reaches out to deserving female students from Maharashtra and scholarships worth Rs.250,000 each are given to five young girls to pursue graduate studies in any scientific field. Thirty-five scholarships have been awarded to date.

The Pune factory itself has recently picked up another prize, this time the internal Citizen of the World Award, for its approach to good citizenship within the community where it is based. "We do not like one-off donations and look for long term projects which will have a long term impact in the communities around Pune, where many of our

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staff come from," he explains.

"Project Care', which won us the first prize, is an integrated project that looks at safety, health and hygiene, the environment and child education, which we deal with in turn on a quarterly basis with the aim of raising standards and improving the local quality of life. We rely on a mix of professional trainers and our own employees from these villages who feel a huge pride in our work and whose voice is sometimes more acceptable to local communities than outsiders."

The project is ongoing and includes facets such as free medical check-ups for the elderly and a scheme to support schools with redundant laboratory and IT equipment that still has relevance in the classroom. The company is also involved in a partnership that will provide two new classrooms to a local school—at present the children have to study outside.

On the procurement side, L'Oréal extends its values by insisting on a very specific vetting process. "Suppliers must pass our stringent quality requirements and also a Safety and Social Audit. We use external consultants like Intertech who will monitor for unacceptable practices such as child labour, ensure that minimum wages are paid and that there is no requirement for excessive working hours. The government has labour laws, but not all companies comply. We only want to work with those that do."

Meanwhile, Sahgal believes that the factory's steady expansion creates a virtuous cycle in the local economy, as at least 50 per cent of staff are recruited from surrounding villages. "Last year we grew our capacity by 30 per cent and there is still enormous scope for L'Oréal in India. It is very important that as we grow, we give something back to the society that has contributed to our success," he concludes. www.loreal.co.in



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