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Delhi airport emerges as the best retail location for luxury brands like Swarovski, M&S & Hidesign

Sagar Malviya & Kailash Babar, ET Bureau Jan 18, 2012, 06.01AM IST

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MUMBAI: Can you name the retail location in India from where Swarovski, Marks &, Samsonite, Hidesign and Kimaya all reported their best sales numbers last calendar? Not Khan Market or Select City Walk Mall in Delhi, not Linking Road or the Phoenix Mall in Mumbai; it's the Delhi airport.

Indira Gandhi International Airport in the capital is the most lucrative retail location in the country, having generated sales of 5,000 per square feet per month in 2011, which is almost four times higher than the second-best location. This figure includes sales from duty-free shops, but regular shops too are buzzing here.

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"Our ticket size at airport is double in value compared locations elsewhere," says Ruchita Sharma, marketing operation manager of high-end crystal products maker Swarovski's consumer goods business. The brand store at the T3 terminal of the Delhi airport ranks among its top stores by sales globally.

Retailers are at a loss to explain why a place meant just for travelling let brands rake in more moolah than most shopping malls and high streets.

Many of them are, in fact, surprised. A case in point is high-end fashion house Kimaya, which did not exactly expected hurried travellers to indulge in *couture* when it opened its outlet in the swanky international terminal in November last.

Its promoter Pradeep Hirani says he had turned down offer to open a shop at the airport two times before saying yes the third time. "For us, it was more of exhibitional than commercial."

Not any more. Today, Kimaya's airport store sales are much higher than its high street outlets at around 3,500 per sq ft every month. And Hirani regrets having opted for a revenue-sharing model-where the retailer pays a percentage of its sales as rental to the airport operator-instead of the high rentals the airport had quoted earlier.



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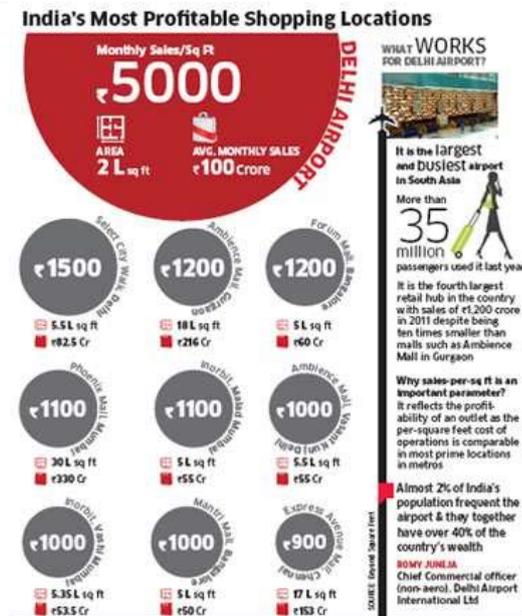
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So what makes Delhi airport the most profitable destination for brands? One reason is its sheer size. It is the largest and busiest airport in South Asia. More than 35 million passengers used it last year.

It is the fourth largest retail hub in the country with sales of 1,200 crore in 2011 despite being ten times smaller than malls such as Ambience Mall in Gurgaon and Phoenix High Street in Mumbai. "For any retailer, sales-per-sq ft is the most important parameter while deciding on setting up their store," says Susil Dungarwal, chief mall mechanic at Beyond Squarefeet Advisory, a boutique mall consultancy firm. It reflects the profitability of an outlet as the per-square feet cost is comparable in most prime locations in metros.

Premium leather accessory brand Hidesign mopped up over 10,000 per sq ft per month on an average against 1,500-6,000 elsewhere, while Samsonite generated sales of 7,200 from the Delhi airport store compared to 1,350 in other stores.

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22 Jan, 2012 08:52 AM

DElhi airport emerges as worst location for flying as they cant put in systems to handle fog ! Maybe it should be renamed Delhi Mall !

Abhishek (Bangalore)

18 Jan, 2012 04:52 PM

This is because the target customers for such brands such as Swarovski, Marks & Spencer, Hidesign, Kimaya are the consumers who strive to find time and not money. And what better way to get a deeper share of their pocket by leaving them stranded at a airport where there is not much to do but to shop.

sub (oslo)

18 Jan, 2012 02:16 PM

Now, having taken one small step, T3 should go for the next step, firmly, which is building a brand image which is through high pressure publicity. To begin with, how about a lucky draw, though on a small scale but firmly and should be a continuous process! For example, there should be a monthly draw for a Merc, Audi, Skoda, Toyota Fortuner or BMW 3 series (costing fully loaded car of 25 -30 lakhs) for a lucky winner). It should be Rs. 500/- per passenger lucky draw coupon for 60,000 passengers (thereby a ratio of 1:60,000, which is fair). If you take into overhead costs like shipping etc. add another 100 per passenger, which will take care of that. It should not pinch the travellers and at the same time, it should be a lucky draw and the ratio 1: 60,000 is fair and people will not bother too much to spend 500/- or maximum 600 from their pocket. If you increase it (to kill a golden goose) it is going to crash. So, people will appreciate and will spread through people and will generate great amount of goodwill and publicity for IGI T3, creating win-win situation for all. But, foremost, it should be generous in giving lucky winners, say, fully loaded car, with added gifts from T3 itself and it should be delivered at the winner's address without any cost to the winner. Only then, can we progress. It should definitely not be 'conditions apply' kind, as we are used to in India but on a generous level!

HVNK (Deonar)

18 Jan, 2012 10:28 AM

'... despite being ten times smaller than malls ... ' you can be 1/10th as large or 90% smaller but NEVER 10 times - after 'one time smaller' you are already at zero size! learn basic math that a 5th grader would know.

nearmsp (USA)

18 Jan, 2012 10:07 AM

I love Delhi airport (except in winter when I avoid for fog delays!). The shopping is great, the food is even better and the ambiance is nice. I would like to see more display boards showing flight departure times and gates at more frequent places. I like the liquor shop in the arrivals area. they have a good selection of liquor. Areas for improvement - the 5 star hotel cars are made to park a long distance away. They should allow curb side pick up for convenience of international travelers.