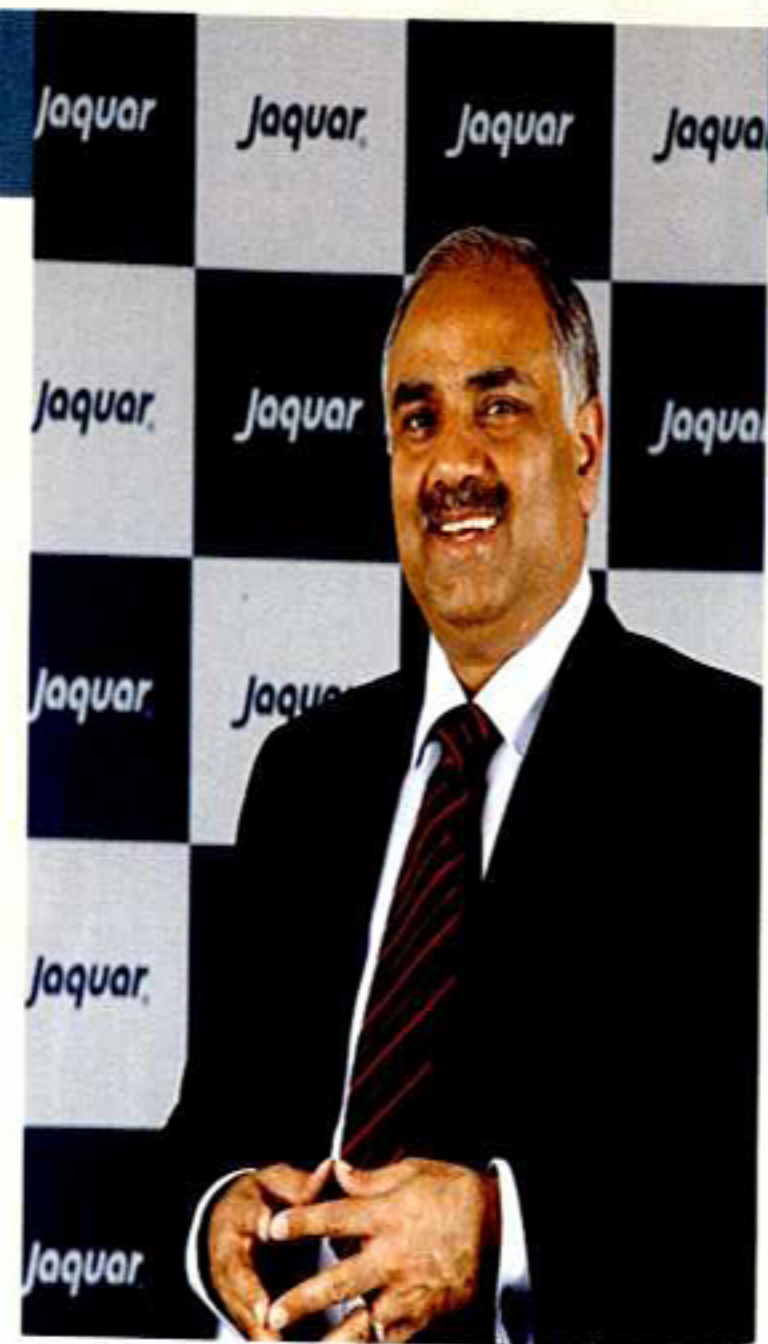


THE BUZZING INDIAN BATH BRAND



Jaquar - The experience of 55 years & 32 countries

Barring the unorganized sector, Indian bath industry, is primarily dominated by foreign players; Jaquar is among the few Indian bath and sanitaryware brands that not only has an Indian niche but a firm overseas presence as well. Since its inception over 55 years ago, the group has been built on the platform of the highest quality standards and aesthetics. Producing over 60,000 faucets a day, delivering over 1.26 million bathrooms a year and adding half a million new customers annually, sky is the limit for the brand. In a rendezvous with SURFACES REPORTER, RAJESH MEHRA, DIRECTOR & PROMOTER, JAQUAR GROUP expressed why & how Jaquar is the buzzing brand of the market.

Being one of the biggest indigenous bath and sanitaryware brands of the country, what makes Jaquar unique among all?

Since its inception over 50 years ago, the Jaquar group has been built on the platform of the highest quality standards and aesthetics. I would say that we have changed the Indian bath market from a purely functional market - of taps as a commodity, to an aspirational market - of bathrooms as a statement of the homeowner's lifestyle and status. Even as a leader in the bath fittings industry, producing over 60,000 faucets a day, delivering over 1.26 million bathrooms a year and adding half a million new customers every year, we continue to have the motivation to keep raising the bar by introducing newer products through constant innovation in design and technology. We have perhaps the best after sales service in the country and it is this entire circle of complete range of products, high quality R&D and manufacturing, great designs, 10-year warranty, and worry-free ownership experience that has helped us succeed.

Like in many other categories, there are wide variations in the Indian bath fittings category. We have multiple players at the functional end of the spectrum and likewise in the luxury segment. But Indians seek value first and foremost. So regardless of what price they pay for a product, they expect returns in terms of not just functionality or design uniqueness but also the suitability for use in tough Indian conditions, durability, maintenance support, and of course the reassurance of a brand committed for the long term. We are fortunate to be among very few names that fulfill those criteria. Jaquar undisputed leadership in branded bath segment is testimony of the fact that quality at Jaquar is our first priority. Being a functional product, India considers Jaquar as the trusted bath brand as per Neilson consumer survey.

What is your opinion on the Swachh Bharat Mission & Housing for all by 2022? Is Jaquar planning

to launch some products to tap on the demand void created with these govt programmes?

Both are excellent initiatives and long overdue in our country. In order to contribute to the Prime Minister's Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan and Housing for All 2022, we have launched a special Swachh Range of excellent value-for-money faucets and sanitary ware under our ESSCO brand that are made well, look good and are very cost effective. Although there are many small players who can also contribute their products to this initiative, I believe our superior manufacturing capabilities and quality consciousness can deliver a product that will be superior in performance and reliability over the long term - which is what is needed for changing bathroom habits or people will return to their old ways.

Faucets are growing faster than ever. Who is driving this change and what kind of products are most sought after in the market?

Of course! When more bathrooms are built, more faucets will be bought. You are referring to the growth in the market for more aesthetic products which I think is because bathrooms are no longer a necessary evil in the house. Once upon a time in India, bathrooms were supposed to be located away from the main building, as per Vaastu etc. Today, bathrooms are no longer considered 'dirty'. In fact, as life becomes more stressful in many ways, bathrooms are turning out to be de-stress zones where you can take a few minutes to get away from the outside world and wash away your stresses with a nice long shower etc. As a result, the aesthetics of bathrooms are becoming increasingly important. The sizes of bathrooms are seeing an upward increase and people are investing more, financially as well as emotionally, into creating better de-stress zones in their homes. Therefore, they are seeking products that enhance their bathing experience in every way, i.e., aesthetically, technically, and experientially.

Many uber luxury real projects are associating big brands today. What do you have to say about the trend? What are the project with which Artize, the luxury brand of Jaquar group is associated with?

This was bound to happen and has been happening since the shift in bathrooms from being purely functional to becoming aspirational, which was triggered by us in India 2-3 decades ago. Actually, what makes life easier for real estate project developers is one-stop solution providers. At Jaquar, we have taken great efforts to offer Complete Bathing Solutions - from Faucets and Showers to Sanitaryware, Wellness and even accessories. We have also launched Jaquar Water Heaters. And yes, in Artize we have a brand that offers very high end products like the Rainjoy shower spa and the award-winning Linea faucet.

FOR ARTIZE, WE ARE ASSOCIATED WITH PROJECTS INCLUDING DELHI'S HOTEL RADISSON, NOIDA'S OMAXE FOREST SPA AND SUPERTech CAPETOWN, MANTRI BUILDERS' ESPANA, RAHEJA'S VIVARIA PROJECTS IN BENGALURU AND THE ROYAL ORCHID HOTEL IN HYDERABAD. AMONG OTHERS. JAQUAR GROUP HAD ALSO BEEN CHOSEN FOR PLACES LIKE BAB AL SHAMS THE 7-STAR RESORT IN DUBAI, THE FOUR SEASONS HOTEL IN MALDIVES, THE KING FAHAD AIRPORT IN DAMMAM, SAUDI ARABIA AND THE RAK LULU MALL IN UAE.

Jaquar group has recently forayed in lighting concept solutions. Tell us about the same?

Just like bath fittings was a highly fragmented segment, when we started, the decorative lighting category also appeared to be a space in need of organization and innovation. Our aim with Jaquar Lighting is to offer a one-window solution with a wide range of high quality products, end-to-end solutions in design, consultancy, customization, light planning and maintenance. We have recently entered in the LED light bulbs and LED fixtures category.

What are Jaquar's plans for 2015 in terms of capacity expansion, R&D, footprint, showrooms and foraying into other verticals? How is the brand performing in overseas market?

We are a company driven not by numerical production or sales targets, but more by what new solutions we can come up with for the consumers. Jaquar group with its three bath brand Artize (Luxury), Jaquar (Value) and Essco (Value) is all set to create defined segment in bathroom market. In bath fittings, we have been working with some of finest designers in the world to develop a range of exciting new products and bath experiences. These include Michael Foley, Lisa Bosi of Italy, Danelon Meroni Design & Parichay Mehra. Jaquar's products have been awarded with international recognition like iF and Plus X award from Germany and Chicago's Good Design award. The brand has also got good response at the ISH, Frankfurt this year. We are already present in over 30 countries of the world and the time appears to be right for us to further build and expand on our success.



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Environmental consciousness too is one of our focus areas. For some time now, we have been offering such products in the market that have superior technologies using air to increase the feel of volume in showers and faucets and thereby reducing the water consumption. We also have an entire range of products that minimise water consumption in high traffic washrooms. Our new headquarters building and complex is aiming for the highest eco-friendly rating too.

Jaquar is a successfully working in India since 1960. So tell us your vision for the Indian Bath & Sanitaryware industry and for Jaquar as a whole.

I THINK THE INDIAN BATH AND SANITARYWARE INDUSTRY HAS GREAT POTENTIAL TO BE A MANUFACTURING BASE FOR THE WORLD just like the automobile business has become for small cars. Our value engineering skills as a nation are very good and the world has started to realize the same too. With improved quality consciousness and consumer centricity, the potential is huge for this industry - not just in India which is going to see a boom in bathroom building now, but across the world. Our vision for Jaquar is not just to grow in terms of numbers but to expand in the stature as well. From the global industry's response at the recently concluded ISH - the world's largest bath industry fair, it looks like we are on the right track. The next few months will be very exciting in terms of new products.