

Quality For All

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TFO offers quality women's clothing for any occasion



The Factory Outlet almost shot to success

Whatever your budget, The Factory Outlet has something to suit you.

Words Yomal Senerath-Yapa | **Photographs** Vishwathan Tharmakulasingam

The Factory Outlet's simple blue and white façade belies the burst of colour and style within. Its star began rising half a decade ago, when a plan was hatched for a clothing store to cater to all types of people. It shot to popularity in almost no time.

Today, exactly five years later, TFO has three branches - in Havelock Town, Pelawatta and Mount Lavinia - and a clientele that cuts across a wide section of society. Shoppers at the

store are almost as varied as the store's founders had originally hoped for, though middle and upper middle-class clients dominate.

Quality is key. The store sells t-shirts from 500 to 2000 rupees, but whatever the price, value for money is guaranteed. The clothing here is export quality, bought from local factories. TFO is proud to proclaim that "people who walk in know we give a quality product for a moderate price".

The store has gathered around it a client base impressed by the edge the shop has over the competition. At one time TFO had as many as 500 Facebook 'likes' in one day - each one a spontaneous thumbs up from a happy customer. Right now TFO is gaining sales momentum too, with a 15 per cent to 20 per cent growth rate that sometimes shoots up as high as 25 per cent.

It is the kids' section that does the briskest business at TFO; unsurprisingly, perhaps, as children outgrow their clothes fast, and have the propensity to spoil them very fast too. But TFO is confident that their kid customers will continue to patronise them as adults, so strong is the bond between the store and its clientele. Their customers increase by the day, and rarely do customers fail to come back again and again.

To further reward customer allegiance, TFO has a loyalty card with lifetime validity, offering rewards for customers who at TFO are regarded family members. That's how the Managing Director of the Factory Outlet Mr. Asif Iqbal thinks about their staff, management and customers: as one extended family. Customers coming from the Middle East and the Maldives are also a valued part of this extended 'social unit'.

At a time when a number of clothing stores sprang up and then died away rapidly in and around Colombo, TFO's success is remarkable. From the way they have weathered their first five years, it is safe to augur that TFO has a much bigger destiny written in the stars.

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