



TEXTILES AND APPAREL

Pivot and Persist: How this Pune-based B2B textile company went from manufacturing corporate uniforms to PPEs during the pandemic

By Bhavya Kaushal | July 27, 2021



Pune-based I-Attire was founded by five friends in 2011. The company manufactured corporate uniforms for BMW, Xiaomi, Samsung, JK Cements, and others before manufacturing PPEs.

 11 CLAPS



The global manufacturing ecosystem was gravely wounded by the COVID-29 pandemic. With complete disruption in supply chains, planned and sudden lockdowns, other



In the last year and half, many Indian brands pivoted to other businesses and persisted during one of mankind's most unprecedented crises, transforming challenges into opportunities. A company that managed to pivot and persist during the lean period is **I-Attire**. This Pune-based company is a B2B manufacturer of corporate uniforms. Founded in 2011, it counts big names like **BMW, Xiaomi, Samsung, JK Cements** and more among its clients.

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However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, I-Attire rose to the challenge of manufacturing much in demand PPEs, and was even able to bag an order from **Indigo Airlines**, **according to I-Attire's founder Ashish Sahay**.

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Moreover, we didn't want to let go of any of them since they have been with us for so long." The company has a strength of 350 employees.

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"The only thing that came to my mind was manufacturing PPEs and face masks," he says.

Ashish adds that the company invested about Rs 3.5 crore in buying machinery and setting up base for manufacturing in its existing units in Pune. Ashish also adds that educating the workers about using the machinery and taking care of the safety measures posed to be a challenge for the company, which it overcame eventually.

Subsequently, the company started distributing the masks and PPE suits to government hospitals, NGOs and even the police in Pune. Word got around as the company received queries, and in July 2020, I-Attire bagged a deal with **Indigo Airlines to provide PPE suits to them for its crew and passengers.**



Since the beginning of this initiative, Ashish claims the company has manufactured 10 lakh

pieces of PPEs in all. The PPEs manufactured by I-Attire are certified by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

The efforts of the company paid off as it was able to report an increase of about 48 percent in its revenue numbers. I-Attire and its associated companies APJ Clothing, Crease and Cuff Clothing Private Ltd and Avant Garde collectively clocked **Rs 35 crore revenue in FY20**, claims it **reported Rs 52 crore revenue in FY21**.

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The story behind I-Attire's inception

Prior to founding I-Attire, Ashish worked with LG in the marketing division. After interacting with a few corporates, he realised that there was a gap in the Indian market for organised B2B corporate uniforms. During his market research, it also struck him that the Indian apparel industry was highly fragmented and unorganised.

Ashish saw this gap as a potential opportunity, and decided to leverage his foresight. He ventured into this territory joined by his university friends - **Parichit Parmar, Shobhit Agarwal, Hussain Shakir and Shashank Bhardwaj**. They were later joined by **Hisham Ajani** and **Jigar Shah** as Directors. And thus began I-Attire in 2011, with a total initial investment of Rs 20 lakh - from Ashish and Parichit's personal savings.



challenges in the beginning as they were still relatively new to the industry, and they had no clarity on what machinery to install even.

Ashish claims that when they started out, there was a price war in the industry. "Small entrepreneurs would drop their price considerably to get the orders. We consulted and stuck to a price point we wanted to build the brand, " he says.

The company's initial focus was on MNCs, but gradually, it started getting orders from bigger players in the business ecosystem, including the likes of **Tata Sky Ltd., Transport Corporation of India, Bajaj Allianz** and many others.

In the last 10 years, I-Attire has managed to carve a niche for itself, and Ashish acknowledges some things that have worked for them. "All that these companies want is formal and timely communication along with transparency. This is what worked for us."

According to Ashish, I-Attire had a team particularly set up to update their clients about any delays with respect to delivering the order. Another factor that worked for the company was having semi-automated manufacturing units in Pune, which also helped in producing a quality product.

The company also entered into a joint venture with well-known textile market player **Mafatlal Industries in 2014.**

I-Attire now manufactures both PPE suits and corporate uniforms.



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The road ahead

Going forward, I-Attire plans to start a product line of nitrile gloves. According to the founder, there is growing demand for nitrile gloves in the country since many players already manufacture latex gloves. The company also wants to hire more people and experts in the field of healthcare products in the next 12-18 months.

Ashish claims the aim is now to make I-Attire a Rs 500 crore company in the next two to three years.

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