

APPAREL

Mc Group's 10-year trial for new status



Mc Group chief executive Sunee Seripanu discusses her company's lifestyle fashion goals for the next decade. The jeans maker intends to offer lifestyle products from head to toe at Mc shops.

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SET-listed Mc Group Plc, maker of the Mc jeans brand, expects to take another 10 years to realise its dream of becoming a total lifestyle fashion company.

Chief executive Sunee Seripanu said her 40-year-old company was preparing its organisation and human resources for future moves to provide lifestyle products and not rely just on jeans any more.

Many mid-level management staff have been recruited to join the company and provide fresh ideas regarding information technology (IT), marketing, product design and management.

"We're looking to become a lifestyle company within the next 10 years," she said.

"Changing the way our staff think will be our biggest challenge."

Mc Group plans to spend 200-300 million baht to install an SAP computer system that will start functioning in June or July.

All staff will be able to access the system for essential information to be used in their departments, from production and marketing to sales.

The system is designed to enhance efficiency in sales and warehouse management and help to reduce inventory.

Ms Sunee said the SAP system would completely change the working environment in preparation for moving forward with non-jean products.

Mc Group is looking to recruit two European executives for IT management and to develop new sales channels.

"We must grow in this way since we can no longer compete on cheap labour costs," Ms Sunee said.

The company also plans to source more products from abroad to sell here and internationally, particularly from Greater China.

A sourcing centre will be opened in Hong Kong or southern China.

Apart from fashion clothing, Mc Group now also sells watches and travel bags.

The arrival of the Asean Economic Community late this year is expected to attract more foreign tourists to the region, while the rising number of low-cost airlines will stimulate regional travel by locals.

"Non-jeans products have huge growth potential," Ms Sunee said.

"We want to offer lifestyle products from head to toe at Mc shops."

However, she said jeans still had much room to grow also among all groups, particularly in Asia.

The company is now recruiting jeans designers from Amsterdam.

"We want as many Thai customers as possible to use and believe in the Mc jeans brand before stepping into the global arena," Ms Sunee said.

Mc jeans are now available in Asean members Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia and Malaysia as well as China.

Group sales increased by 15-20% to 3.53 billion baht last year for a net profit of 712 million.

MC shares closed yesterday on the SET at 14.50 baht, up 10 satang, in trade worth 5.93 million baht.