Global Brands

GU
Theory
J Brand
Comptoir des Cotonniers
Princesse tam.tam
GU (pronounced “jee-you”) offers fun fashion at fabulously low prices. Building on UNIQLO’s experience as an SPA apparel manufacturer and retailer, GU has created its own unique business model for low-priced fashion in Japan. In fiscal 2014, GU revenue topped ¥100 billion for the first time, and we are now looking to expand revenue to ¥300 billion over the medium term.

The number of GU stores in Japan increased to 275 at the end of August 2014. We want to grow to 500 stores by opening approximately 50 new stores each year. Moreover, GU’s ambitious expansion has moved beyond Japan. We opened our first store outside Japan in Shanghai in September 2013. This was followed by two stores in Taiwan that received an enthusiastic reception when they opened in fall 2014. We plan to open GU stores all over Asia.

GU offers a wide range of low-priced, trendy fashion, under the concept “more freedom with fashion.” CEO Osamu Yunoki says, “I am determined to ensure GU balances fashion and attention to detail. GU’s kawaii (cute) Japanese image helps set it apart from European and U.S. fast fashion brands in Asia. I want to create stores with lots of fun fashion that everyone can enjoy.” We believe GU’s Japanese-style fast fashion will become increasingly popular in Asia as the brand expands further.

Fashion Freedom and Japanese Kawaii
The Keys to Asian Expansion
Launched in New York in 1997, the Theory fashion brand appeals to the contemporary woman. Theory is well known for its silhouette-enhancing designs, which use stretch materials for ultimate comfort and a smooth fit. The brand’s concept is basic clothes with a subtle, natural sense of fashion. Theory’s CEO, Andrew Rosen, played a pivotal role in the founding of Theory and has shepherded its subsequent development. The brand enjoyed instant success when it was launched in Japan in 1999.

Lisa Kulson, Theory’s original head designer and current creative director, wants to uphold the brand’s integrity and aesthetic while pushing it forward. “The Theory customer wants to see a little bit more femininity and sexiness, but in a sophisticated way,” she says. “Theory has become known as the “go-to” place to furnish a career woman’s wardrobe, and we want to make clothes that enhance the lifestyles of fashionable, sophisticated urban women.” Indeed, Theory’s 2015 Spring/Summer collection offers more color, as well as fashion-forward, sophisticated silhouettes.

Other Theory brands include HELMUT LANG, and the Japan-born PLST brand. PLST has proved extremely popular among elegant, fashion-conscious consumers, and is fast becoming a second mainstay brand for the Theory business. At the end of August 2014, Theory boasted a total of 460 stores and sales of approximately ¥80 billion.
J Brand is a Los Angeles-based contemporary fashion brand that specializes in denim. Founded in 2005, J Brand is recognized for its high-quality denim fabrics, sophisticated product design, beautiful silhouettes and perfect fit. The premium denim ranges for women in particular are considered among the best in the world, appealing to many actresses, models and other celebrities.

J Brand is sold in more than 2,000 leading department stores and specialty boutiques in over 20 countries, with a large presence in the United States. Following the opening of the first Japanese store in Osaka’s Hankyu Umeda department store in October 2013, J Brand is now building a fan base in Japan as well.

J Brand’s Stocking Jeans, launched in March 2014, use fabric made from a perfect mix of denim and nylon for maximum stretch and outstanding fit. It is not only the superior fabrics that set J Brand apart. Its dedication to fine details, such as the use of the rare metal ruthenium to give buttons a unique patina, is evident in its products.

J Brand collaborated with Simone Rocha, named an Emerging Designer by the British Fashion Awards, to create a capsule collection for the 2014 Fall/Winter season, which featured attractive denim jackets and pants with modern yet feminine ruffles. J Brand will continue to push boundaries and bring new perspectives to the denim industry.
The Comptoir des Cotonniers (CDC) women's fashion brand emerged from boutiques that opened in 1995 in Paris and Toulouse. CDC, known for its quality fabrics and sharp silhouettes, designs timeless collections full of French esprit. CDC offers French style and elegance that appeal to the modern active city woman. The label's popularity as a brand offering high-quality fashion at affordable prices is only growing.

The 2014 Fall/Winter collection was inspired by the French New Wave films of the late 1950s, featuring trench coats as well as oversized cardigans, shoes, bags and accessories—the collection proved extremely popular among trendy women. The light down jackets featured in the Mademoiselle Plume mini collection also won acclaim for their unconventional French style, light feel, and convenient portability.

CDC’s launch of a mobile shopping app for Europe in spring 2014 captured customer attention, as did the one-click payment feature and 48-hour delivery service offered as part of its Fast Shopping campaign.

At the end of August 2014, CDC had a total of 374 stores: 227 in France, 93 in other parts of Europe, 46 in Japan and the rest of Asia, and 8 in the United States.
Princesse tam.tam (PTT) is a French brand offering corsetry, homewear, swimwear and sportswear. After winning acclaim for lingerie that featured original prints and bright colors, the sisters Loumia and Shama Hiridjee opened their first store in the Saint Germain area of Paris in 1987.

The brand concept of “lingerie made by women for women” resonates strongly with its loyal repeat customers. Tapping the craft skills of the French corsetry industry, PTT garments are made from the finest lace, silk and cotton and crafted to the smallest detail.

In April 2014, PTT opened its online store for Europe, and in August it expanded the service to Japan. The site is very popular with Japanese customers, as it offers the virtual experience of shopping in Paris. The 2014 Fall/Winter Résille Collection, which combined a bold interpretation of famous Résille lace patterns with cool and elegant style, proved very popular.

At the end of August 2014, PTT boasted 152 directly operated and franchise stores housed in leading department stores and boutiques in France (such as Galeries Lafayette and Printemps) and other parts of Europe. PTT products are also offered in over 1,000 other stores in 48 countries.