



Powering the Future

Since the takeoff of the Digital India initiative, the smartphone market in the country has seen a boom. This flourishing industry has also provided a boost to companies manufacturing phone accessories, of which mobile power banks are among the most used. At a global level too, the power bank market is poised for tremendous growth—it is expected to be valued at US\$ 25.16 billion by 2022, at a CAGR of 21.2% between 2017 and 2022. In this exclusive interview with India Now Business and Economy, Gaurav Dureja, Director, Ambrane India, talks about the opportunities this industry holds for established as well as emerging players.*

Ambrane's journey started with a modest capital. What were the key challenges?

Investment in every business should be done thoughtfully and smartly, even if it is a small amount, and for Ambrane, the ticket size was not more than ₹10 lakh. Beginning with such a humble investment in the year 2012, followed by several developments, today we stand at a turnover of ₹100 crore. In a short span of time, we were able to build our brand in a market where power banks were not well known.

Our initial challenges were regarding operations and manufacturing—lack of skilled manpower, unavailability of good-quality raw materials, and technology in terms of machinery and spare parts. Over a period of time, we overcame these and are among the leading players.

What is Ambrane's differential strategy in a competitive market? Further, how do you compete with MNCs?

Our strength lies in 'Make in India'. We are a 100% 'Made in India' brand, and have been doing so even before the government started the initiative. We do not just assemble parts to make products; we build products, tailor-made to the needs of the market. Price is another key element.

We have often introduced innovative technology in the Indian market, and hence enjoy the first-mover advantage in many categories. We have sold more than a million products across the country and are present in tier 2 and tier 3 cities too, where many brands are still competing for retail space. Our online retail is working well too.

Ambrane enjoys 15-20% market share. Being a manufacturer, the Make in India campaign has been beneficial to us—we are leveraging the benefit

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of competitive pricing and a strong R&D team established for innovation and product development. We ensure we are up to date with the latest market trends, which enables us to provide better service to our target audience.

Could you briefly describe your business model?

Our business model is both B2B and B2C. We serve across all age groups and categories. We have a wide range of unique products and have also diversified

Ambrane follows stringent manufacturing and quality control processes.





Apart from power banks Ambrane manufactures other IT and audio accessories too.

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with the evolving trends. Today, Ambrane is not just known for power banks; it goes beyond that.

How do you manage distribution, both online and offline?

We began with an online set-up when e-commerce was a relatively new trend. Today, we are among the top brands for IT accessories and have done extensive business with online retailers such as Amazon, Flipkart, and Snapdeal. Our sales figures have been consistently high, not just during festive seasons but throughout the year. Following a steady growth online, we now plan to expand our footprints offline too, and have been working aggressively towards establishing our network. Our biggest priority presently is to reach pan India, offline.



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Being a product-oriented startup, obtaining and acting on customer feedback is critical to your growth. How have such insights influenced product specs or design?

It is really important to make your customers feel valued and heard. We are quite active when it comes to listening to our customers, be it via customer queries, feedback, or issues. We have a back-end team that connects with our customers online/offline and ensures that their issues are resolved within 48 hours. We have also introduced a ‘no questions asked policy,’ under which a faulty product is replaced immediately without asking the customer any questions.

For us, customer feedback is as important as any other aspect of our business. It has helped a lot in the past, especially when we were evaluating what category of power banks—in terms of capacity (mAh)—would work best. It was customer feedback that provided us the insight of making lightweight products.

Role of social media in ‘spreading the message’ about the product...

We have a huge fan base across various social media channels, and these facilitate firsthand connect with our customers. We focus on brand awareness, visibility, and connect in our communication approach. Social media has helped a lot in creating awareness about Brand Ambrane. It has also served as a medium for customer feedback and we have used it to our advantage by resolving queries obtained through it.

Growth in numbers...

We hold a share of around 15-20% in the power banks category. We are present in most big retail chains and with most online retailers too. Ambrane ranks among the top five in several product categories—power banks, cable chargers, and earphones. Last year, we were a ₹100-crore brand and our target is to double this revenue this year.



Customer insights have helped create better, more user-friendly products.

As per Newzoo’s Global Mobile Market Report, April 2017, India has the world’s second highest number of smartphone users. How does Ambrane view the long term opportunity?

The growing demand for smartphones has given rise to a growing demand for accessories—power banks, cables, and speakers. Technological advancements have been welcomed by Indian consumers, triggering an opportunity for sale of other mobile phone accessories. India having the world’s second biggest smartphone user base is a very big plus for us. It gives us an opportunity to diversify our product range.

What are your goals for the future?

We have established a wide reach in India and are now focusing on reaching international markets. We have already diversified from just IT accessories and are now available in the audio category too. Over the next one month, we plan to launch over 30 audio products, not defined by price but by superior quality. ■

*<https://www.marketsandmarkets.com/PressReleases/power-bank.asp>

(As told to Ashutosh Gotad)