

cromā



A visit to a Croma store is like entering an electronic version of Alibaba's cave. Croma sells nearly 6,000 electronic products and appliances of 180 brands and at prices to fit all budgets — cell phones start at Rs1,800 and go up to Rs38,000 for PDAs; microwaves are priced from Rs2,500 to Rs16,000.

Croma's tagline — 'we help you buy' — underlines the design and customer experience of the store. With clean, open layouts and interactive displays, customers can easily find what they are looking for and compare features across brands — check programmes on TVs for colour, clarity and sound or try out features on laptops that are wi-fi connected. The sales staff is trained to answer queries and help customers make choices.

The store puts in a focused effort on building relationships and engaging with customers. A 52-week plan plots festivals and holidays during which attractive offers and special discounts are run to induce walk-ins. There are technical classes to inform people about product features and benefits. There is also a 'gadget check' facility where people can bring in any old appliance for free servicing, even those not bought at a Croma store.

In keeping with the Tata credo of working with the local community, Croma believes in generating employment for the local people. Before each new store opens, a banner is put up inviting job applications from the locals. Recruits go through English language, yoga and dramatics classes as part of induction. Training is a continuous process to keep the staff's technical knowledge up-to-date.

Croma has ambitious expansion plans involving 35-40 new stores — a mix of standalone and mall stores — in the coming year. By March 2009 Croma hopes to have close to 60 stores across India in major metros, before moving on to build a presence in tier-II cities such as Amritsar, Chandigarh, Jalandhar, etc.



Indian consumers are very price and brand-conscious; they want good deals at a good price. They come to Croma because it is value for money and it's a Tata enterprise, thinking that the brand may let me down, but the Tatas won't.

Ajit Joshi, CEO, Infiniti Retail





Fact file

The beginning: Launched in October 2006, Croma is India's first country-wide chain of consumer electronics and durables. It is managed by Infiniti Retail, a 100 per cent subsidiary of Tata Sons. Croma receives technical and strategic sourcing support from Woolworths India, a subsidiary of Woolworths, the Australian retail giant.

The store: The large format stores offer products in eight categories — large appliances, home entertainment, small appliances, computers and peripherals, communication, music and movies, imaging and gaming software. Customers get to make choices from a large range and more brands in electronic products and appliances, and white goods.

The spread: Currently there are 21 stores in six cities (Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Mumbai, New Delhi, Pune and Surat).