



Fact file

The beginning: Landmark started operations in 1987 with a store in Chennai. It is the first large-format book retailer in India. In 2004, Trent acquired a 76 per cent strategic interest in Landmark and its subsidiary firms. The company completed the 100 per cent acquisition in May 2008.

The store: Landmark follows the long-tail format: to have the widest possible range in every category. Although the primary categories are books and music, the store also sells stationery, magazines, toys, movies, and in the larger stores, home décor products.

The spread: Currently there are 11 stores in eight cities (Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Gurgaon, Lucknow, Mumbai, Pune and Vadodara).





A dream destination for book and music lovers, Landmark's USP is its wide range: it stocks bestsellers as well as other titles that may be obscure to many but is a grail for the diehard book or music fan. Since 1996 Landmark stores cater to leisure shopping by offering a wide choice in product categories — not just books and music, but also toys, movies, gifts, stationery and home products.

Customers benefit from the chain's central inventory; a title not available in one store can be sourced from anywhere in the country and shipped to the customer. Landmark holds regular events such as book readings and music performances to attract customers. It is also the only retail chain that offers tickets for plays and other performing arts without charging a commission.

The retail stores are complemented by Landmark's online business (www.landmarkonthenet.com), a distribution company (Westland Book Distribution Company, the second largest in the country) and a new venture into the publishing business (Tranqobar, which has recently launched its first big book, Sayed Mirza's *Ammi*). Landmark is now present in the entire retail chain: publishing, distribution, retail stores and online shopping.

Landmark's biggest challenge is to expand the large-format store chain by finding new retail space at the correct price. To counter this, it is getting into alternative channels — customers will now find Landmark at Hyderabad airport, at Taj and Ginger hotels and even campus bookshops (an IT campus in Chennai). Training staff to cater to customers' preferences is another challenge that requires a continuous process.

The chain will continue to focus on the top metros along with a few stores in select tier II cities. It will also add technology products — mp3 players, gaming, cell phones, high-end laptops — in its stores and plans to launch online music — making it the first conglomerate to start music downloads in India.



It's been said that if you can't find a book or a music title anywhere, it will be at Landmark. That's our differentiator. People know that we have the widest range and they come in and buy.

**Himanshu Chakrawarti, COO,
Landmark**