

Eva Manandhar

KATHMANDU: "WITH THE number of teeshirts we've sold so far, sometimes we feel like every other person in Kathmandu must have three or four of ours, but we don't see as many people wearing them and wonder where they've all gone," said Bijay Shahi, CEO of attsh. Whether in Kathmandu or outside attsh tee-shirts have captured the young generation with a multitude of attractive and witty designs along with quality fabrics. Younger brother Ajay Shahi, who looks after manufacturing explained, "It's mostly people who are going to foreign countries who come to get our tee-shirts. There have been times when they've emailed us the designs they've wanted and asked friends to get it for them."

HOW IT STARTED

It all began when Bijay had gone as an interpreter and assistant coach to the Bangkok Asian Games in 1998 and circumstances arose that the teeshirts for the Nepali team had to be printed then and there. "I was very impressed with the fine printing job that was done, and discussed with my brothers to do something similar here," he said. Hence, with his brothers, and with the help and encouragement of friends in Korea, they began their work in 1999. They brought the first number printing machine by Insta company, a US-based company and claim that they are the only ones till now who do number printing in Nepal. "I went to Korea, got the machine imported from the US along with technicians, took 15 days training before bringing it here," said Bijay. Their first major assignment was to make prints for all the teeshirts for the Nepali team for SAF games in 1999.

GETTING TO ATTSH

They moved on to new avenues doing transfer art, getting pictures and drawings from paper printed on a teeshirt. And that is how they got their name attsh — art transfer tee-shirt house. They even have a slogan to match their work — 'Simple shop with unique job'. "Previously, getting plain tee-shirts used to be quite a problem, so we visited Bangkok numerous times for this purpose," he added. But now the tee-shirts are stitched here from quality fabrics they get from Bangladesh and India. The thread used for stitching also comes from India and is of A-grade. Over the years the Shahi brothers have mastered this art not only by continuously working in this field but also going to Ahmedabad to get trainings in tee-shirt printing. Every aspect of making a tee-shirt from cutting, stitching, ironing to packaging is carried out with care.

CATCHY ONE-LINERS

What made their tee-shirts stand out from the rest were also the eye-catching one-liners that in a way encouraged youngsters to speak their mind and flaunt their attitudes. The designs are researched and worked on for days by Unesh Shahi who looks after designing and customer relations. These days, what he is mainly focusing on is slogans with amusing illustration to go with it. Another aspect they capture is to reflect the current situation of the country and social issues in a humorous and interesting manner. "Although the catchy slogans help a lot, we also faced a lot of problems as copies were made easily and cheaper ones were readily available in the market," said Bijay, adding. "The difference in ours is that we use ISI certified chemicals which are not harmful to the skin."

FINE DETAILS WITH VARIETY

He also proudly claims, "We can print designs with the finest details that no one else can." They use imported equipment for this — from making the first print to getting it on board, the printing, heating and finally giving it the kind of finish from matte to glossy. Nowadays, they offer a variety of prints that customers can choose from, such as computer cutting film print or rubber print, photo process print, screen print, which is available in different formats. Besides that the prints can also be done in steel badges and souvenir tee-shirts, wind cheaters. Tee-shirts are available from sized 22 to 54 or from Baby size to 4XL. If one wishes, one can also take one's own designs and get those printed in a tee-shirt of the size they desire. Currently, they have a showroom in Jawalakhel which is mainly looked after by Sanjay with whom you can sit and discuss the design you want. One can make individual ones for a slightly higher price. For the convenience of customers another showroom is opening soon at UWTC.

SPORTY OUTLOOK

Besides making youngsters look cool, their contribution to the sports world cannot be overlooked. Almost every person playing for a league has worn our tee-shirt," says Bijay. And being sports lovers, they want to establish themselves as a brand in the sports arena where they have repaired jerseys for a number of teams, while leading national players have sported the attsh brand time and again. International non-Governmental Organisations are another area where their teeshirts are quite popular. Talking about what makes them stand apart from the rest Bijay says, "We provide good quality products, maintain good relations with our customers, provide delivery on time and most importantly we believe that nothing is impossible."

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