

# THE Franchising WORLD

START YOUR OWN BUSINESS



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**ISSUE FOCUS**  
EXIT THE CUBICLE

**INDUSTRY**  
CARTRIDGE REFILL

**MARKETING**  
MAKING A DIFFERENCE

**INTERNATIONAL  
FRANCHISING**

- ▶ MIDDLE EAST LABELS
- ▶ FURNISHING BRANDS

# Writing Future in Ink

INSIDE  
**SME**  
SMALL BUSINESS ENTREPRENEUR

WINNER OF  
FRANCHISOR OF  
YEAR 2008



THE PRE-SCHOOL SPECIALIST

# REFILL PROFITS, THE RE-FEEL WAY

**T**HOUGH the time seems tough for many, certain businesses can still ink success, their businesses being the cost cutting measures in themselves besides providing a safer option to the prospective franchisees. The statement holds good for the nascent cartridge refilling industry of India which is poised to succeed even in this recessionary scenario. Rather the time seems right as individuals, as well as, corporates look for every single measure to cut on the cost incurred by them. The cartridge

refilling market is projected to be around Rs 3,000 crore in India, with a present growth rate of over 30 per cent year-on-year. One company poised to grow with the promising industry is Re-feel.

### Striking the right cord

Finding potential in the Cartridge refilling market owing to the penetration of IT in the big corporates, as well as SME sector, besides the boom IT was witnessing in India,

Re-feel carried out an extensive research for three years before



venturing into this business. Started by first generation entrepreneurs, its first outlet opened in Kolkata in February 2007 and it now has 40 outlets covering over 25 cities across India and evolving continuously in tandem with dedicated and passionate store owners and valued customers.

Talking about the origin of Re-feel, Alkesh Agarwal, CEO, Refeel Cartridge Engineering says, "During our research, we came across the concept of organised cartridge refilling globally. This prompted us to start a chain of branded refilling stores and provide a one stop solution for printer and printer consumables pan India."

An extensive market analysis gave Re-feel the confidence that organised printer cartridge refilling with retail stores all over India was the only solution to meet the ever changing demands of the industry.

Cartridge refilling not only saves the cost of buying OEM cartridges



From Left: Rajesh Agarwal, Head - Technical & IT; Samit Lakhota, Head - Business Development; Alkesh Agarwal, CEO; Amit Barmecha, Head - Administration



Re-Feel Store: Feel the difference

while providing comparable quality, but also is nature friendly as it reduces lots of e-waste. A cartridge takes over 400 years to biodegrade. Research shows that during the life of a printer, the number of cartridges that we throw in the landfills is at least seven times the volume of printers. The total amount of cartridges thrown in the landfills in seven years can build a bridge from the earth to the moon, if put one after another.

Re-feel, therefore, tapped the opportunity well in time when there were not many organised players in the cartridge refilling sector.

### Offerings with Advantages

Re-feel is primarily into refilling of printer cartridge both inkjet and laser. It also sells OEM cartridges, speciality paper, fax supplies, printers and office supplies. It has also introduced pre-ink and self inking office stamps from

its outlets.

In addition to the various products and services, Re-feel provides free pick and drop facilities to its clients and all its products are backed by 100 per cent money-back guarantee. 'Save Money, Save Nature' being its slogan, Re-feel keeps on launching consumer education drives from its stores to educate them on these two key issues.

Cartridge refilling is a very dynamic industry which keeps on changing very fast due to frequent changes in printer models and printer technology. Re-feel has an R&D centre in Kolkata backed by a dedicated team

which keeps on tracking the technological developments in the industry and providing useful inputs to the franchisees. Owing to its strong technical team, Re-feel stores can refill maximum number of printer cartridge models in India. Re-feel thrives to be technically inspired, economically sound and environmentally safe.

Besides providing the whole bouquet of products and services, Re-feel will also introduce new products and services at regular intervals for its franchised outlets, giving its franchisees an added advantage. "At Re-feel, we believe that continuous growth is the only path which leads to success and continuous growth can only be achieved by having a very strong customer support system," avers Agarwal.

At Re-feel, the cartridge can be refilled several times, providing print quality almost equivalent to original

### Requirements

**Investment:** Rs 8-10 lakh for A cities and Rs 4-6 lakh for B cities

**Area:** 300 to 400 sq.ft

**People required for running an outlet:** Five

**Break even period:** 3 to 4 months

**ROI period:** 12-18 months

Marketing & Administration  
Training at Re-Feel:  
Training makes all the difference



while saving nature by reducing e-waste and conserving natural resources. Moreover, the customers can save up to 75 per cent on the print cost without compromising on quality.

### Franchising, the way to grow

With a clear vision to build the business nationally, Re-feel focussed on franchising to spread the brand. After extensive travel and international exposure through training and exhibitions, Re-feel started franchising in October 2007. Agarwal considers franchising the best way to grow exponentially as it builds a common platform for research and development and the franchisor shares the knowledge and expertise that he has gathered over the period of time. Finding franchising the most suitable way to expand Samit Lakhotia, Head - Business Development says, "The individual stores are not economically viable with the huge expenditure on marketing, technology and other back end activities, but in our case the cost is being shared amongst all the franchisees."

At present, Re-feel has two formats operational, namely, Exclusive Stores and Re-feel Points. Re-feel has micro manufacturing facilities at all its franchise stores. Re-feel Point is an extended arm of a Re-feel Store which

acts as a collection and delivery point to reach out to more consumers and make the service available locally throughout the region where there are Re-feel Stores.

### Marketing

Referral advertising works best for Re-feel. Backed by a strong support system and a successful business model, some of its franchisees have already opened multiple outlets and are also persuading their near and dear ones to join this successful business model.

In addition to it, Re-feel has

earmarked a budget of Rs 15 crore for brand promotion and franchise marketing. Re-feel created an awareness drive through media by doing several press conferences. The company is further planning to hit a series of promotional campaigns across all media verticals to have a proper brand positioning and to create awareness about the industry. Bennet & Coleman Co. Ltd has invested Rs 15 crore in Re-feel and will help the company in creating awareness about the concept and also in building the brand on a national level.

### Aid to succeed

At Re-feel, training is an experience in itself. It uses the best technology and techniques for refilling cartridges. Specific raw materials for different cartridges are used in order to derive the best performance from the cartridge.

A complete business model training on the refilling industry is provided to all its franchisees at its head office. From signing the franchise agreement till the store is operational, Re-feel assists its franchisees in all operations. The training is further supported with an easy to understand operation manual for all the activities. Before inauguration, Re-feel's technical staff

### Training and support

#### Pre operational:

- Site selection
- Store design/layout: an interior manual as per the store specifications with complete detailing
- Training: 10 days covering technical, marketing, administration, store management, accounts.
- Market analysis and strategy finalisation

#### Post operational:

- On site training: Machinery installation by our technical team and on-the-job training
- Technical support and training
- Marketing support and training
- Admin support
- Store management support
- Brand building support

coordinates the store set-up activities by being physically present at the store. This gives the franchisee an opportunity to brush up with a second round of on-the-job training.

For regular ongoing support, the Re-feel team is just a call or a mail away.

### Role of franchisees

The franchisees are the face of Re-feel, as it is they who interact with the customers. The brand reaches out to the customers through its franchisees. At Re-feel, franchisees are partners for their respective areas. Re-feel franchisees are more than eager to provide quality services to customers and get adequately paid for their efforts as they get return on investment within 12 to 18 months.

Re-feel looks for entrepreneurial drive, zeal for marketing, ability to grow in the ever changing industrial scenario and work hand in hand to save nature with the prospective franchisees. The company also has high profile service executives who have left their jobs and joined hands with it. Re-feel believes that an experienced person always brings value to the system. "Our existing franchisee profile is our asset which



consists of MBAs, CAs, doctors, housewives and businessmen giving our brand a multidimensional identity. The diverse background and the experience of Re-feel store owners, coupled with our expertise in the cartridge refilling industry, enables us to provide outstanding products and services to our customers," adds Agarwal.

### Competition

Talking of competition in the cartridge refilling space, Agarwal states, "There is a big market need

owing to the gap between high priced original cartridges and unorganised refillers who provide poor quality solutions. We offer original like print quality providing savings as big as 75 per cent on the print cost." However, one needs to constantly upgrade oneself in order to get going, as with the ever changing printer models, cartridge refilling too needs modifications.

Elaborating on the strong footing of Re-feel in the minimal time period, Agarwal states, "Initially, it was difficult to get acceptance, the market being immature. But the hard work we put in to educate people about the concept and the potential it had, paid off."

Due to the national presence and very high scale of operations, Re-feel has a lot of advantages and synergies which it will leverage for maximising the benefits to the franchisees. Re-feel aims to have a nationwide presence with plans to open 250 stores by 2010. For expansion, Re-feel is targeting all unrepresented areas with specific focus on northern and southern India.

For entrepreneurs who wish to explore an opportunity which will have a positive impact on the environment and also offer good business, Re-feel offers a value proposal for the same.

*To become a partner with Re-Feel:*

**Email:** franchise@re-feel.in

**Log on to:** www.re-feel.in

**Call:** 9330 23 23 24 / 9331 64 64 64

Refeel Cartridge Engineering Pvt. Ltd.  
113/1, Lake Town, Block-A,  
Kolkata-700 089.

### Franchisee Feedback



"I started my first Re-feel store in October 2007 in Kolkata and made an operational profit in the very first month itself. I immediately finalised and started the second store in December '07. Now, I have finalised five stores in Kolkata, my customer base is increasing and I am getting repeat business, thanks to Team Re-feel."

**Deepak Bothra, Kolkata Franchisee**

"When my husband and I decided to start something on our own, we explored various options before zeroing on refilling. Once we decided that refilling and reusing is the way forward, as it has not only great business potential but also helps us in contributing to a greener environment, we explored three companies which were offering franchisee for refilling of cartridges. We were looking for a company which was transparent, where processes and detailing was religion, where people driving it were passionate and committed and were ready to support us in building the business. In three months of opening the franchise, we are glad that our assessment was bang on target."

**Ashwini Nathany, Powai, Mumbai Franchisee**



"After coming back from Singapore, I found printer cartridge refilling a very exciting business opportunity and started my first 'Green Re-feel' outlet in Koramangala, Bengaluru during August 2008. Though I did not have any prior experience or knowledge in this field, with great support from Re-feel, Kolkata and their professional guidance, we have seen our refilling business grow steadily in the past four months. Now, we plan to open more outlets across the city. With our quality of service and the warranty we provide, our individual and corporate clients are more than happy to get their printer cartridges 'Re-feeled' from us, thus saving money without compromising on quality."

**Vijay Varma, Koramangala, Bangalore Franchisee**

