

TASTE OF A CENTURY

THE WAGH BAKRI TEA COMPANY BELIEVES IN BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS OVER A CUPPA

OUR REPORTER

IT IS ALWAYS INTERESTING and inspiring to learn about a successful entrepreneur. And it gets even better when the story focuses on a century-long Indian-born business.

This here is the success story of Parag Desai, a highly motivated and confident businessman, who generated the idea of 'building relationships' over a cup of tea. He is the man behind Wagh Bakri, the iconic brand of tea known for its high quality and varied taste, and sipped by millions all over the world. The values and philosophy behind the creation of Wagh Bakri has been handed over for generations since 1892, the year it was created by Narandas Desai. Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, who praised him for his commendable work, he tried his luck on Indian soil after gaining experience in tea business as an owner of tea garden in South Africa.

"Every successful brand is built on certain values, which eventually becomes the very character of the brand. Wagh Bakri too is built on a strong philosophy," says Parag Desai, Executive Director of one of the largest tea houses in India, with a turnover of ₹450 crore (US\$95 million). Aimed at increasing its market share, Desai visited Australia last month and emphasised his ambition of making Wagh Bakri a major player in the Australian market.

Says Desai, who is determined to consolidate the brand's presence in Australia, "We are looking at entering the

larger Australian market. We are very confident about our flavour and the quality of our tea. With time, we are sure to be market leaders."

This family-owned tea business that believes in "building relationships" has an unmarked history of over 100 years. The company that enjoys undisputed market presence in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Goa, has recently been introduced in Delhi and Hyderabad with firm determination to expand its growth into the North Indian market. It has conquered the world market by making leading strides in tea exports to USA, UK, Canada, New Zealand, Middle East and many other countries besides Australia.

Wagh Bakri Tea House now markets various tea brands in loose-leaf cartons and tea bags for tea lovers all over the globe. Using the finest certified black teas from Darjeeling tea estates, Assam and Nilgiri, the company excels in selling organic black and green tea for the health conscious.

Produced at Dholka, Gujarat, the tea plant is spread in 14 acres with a modern manufacturing plant and state of art production and packaging unit that conforms to International norms in producing, blending



Wagh Bakri Executive Director Parag Desai in Melbourne

and packaging of the finest tea leaves.

One of the major reasons for Wagh Bakri's success is its range of products that cater to every choice — strong Assam tea, Organic tea, Green Tea, Darjeeling tea, the South Indian tea, Chinese, Sri Lankan, Kenyan tea and flavoured tea. Whether you are looking for more cups with minimum

consumption of tea or you are a true tea lover with an affinity for the rarest flavour, Wagh Bakri serves the best cup for you. "At Wagh Bakri, tea is not merely a drink; it is a medium through which we've built an endearing relationship with millions of people around the world," says Desai.

Wagh Bakri has a global certification from Lacon, Germany for 100% Certified Organic Indian tea as well as HACCP & ISO 22000 certification, which

ensures the ultimate world-class quality standards for consumers. "Excellence is not a one-off act; it's a habit. At Wagh Bakri, it has been our constant endeavour to transform your tea drinking into an extraordinary experience by means of our quality checks, high-class production and innovative packaging. And this has ensured that we are a growing force in this industry," says Desai. With the aim of spreading its aroma to the European continent, the company is also striving towards achieving BRC (British Retail Consortium) certification to meet European standards.

Being one of the largest players in the tea industry in India, the group already caters to the 300,000 outlets across India. As of now, with the base in USA, company aims to spread out across the North America with full-fledged set up and systematic marketing strategies. On entering the market, Wagh Bakri Group, in the next five years company would set up a teabag machine in one of the free trade zones in UAE.

The group, which always looks forward to new methods to enhance the consumption of tea, recently purchased IMA C-27 from Italy, which can make 250 staple-free tea bags a minute. Its short production cycle keeps the delicious flavour and aroma of the tea intact for a longer period. As the bags are meticulously tied with thread, they offer optimum infusion efficiency, making it possible to use in a microwave oven too.

