

How Abhishek Ganguly Built Puma into India's Top Sportswear Brand

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Abhishek Ganguly's journey at **Puma India** stands out as one of the most compelling leadership success stories in India's sportswear and lifestyle retail space. Over nearly two decades, Ganguly played a pivotal role in transforming Puma from a marginal player into **India's largest and most influential sportswear brand**, redefining how young consumers perceive athletic fashion.

Laying the Foundation: Early Years at Puma

Ganguly joined Puma India in **2005 as Director of Sales and Marketing**, at a time when the Indian sportswear market was dominated by global rivals and lacked strong lifestyle positioning. From the outset, he focused on understanding Indian consumer behaviour, distribution challenges and the untapped potential of youth-driven fashion.

His ability to combine operational discipline with marketing insight quickly set him apart, paving the way for larger leadership responsibilities.

A Strategic Shift: Making Puma Youth-Centric

After taking over as **Managing Director of Puma India in 2014**, Ganguly spearheaded a decisive shift in strategy. He repositioned Puma not just as a performance sports brand but as a **fashion-forward, youth-first lifestyle label**.

This included:

- Blending **sportswear with streetwear and athleisure**
- Investing heavily in **celebrity endorsements and cultural relevance**
- Collaborating with pop culture, music and fashion influencers

High-profile partnerships with personalities such as **Virat Kohli and Mary Kom** helped Puma connect emotionally with young Indian consumers.

Omnichannel Expansion

Under Ganguly's leadership, Puma India expanded aggressively across **physical retail and digital platforms**. The brand grew its footprint to nearly **500 stores across India**, while also strengthening its e-commerce presence to cater to changing shopping habits.

This omnichannel focus ensured accessibility across metros and emerging cities alike, making Puma a household name among India's youth.

Record Growth and Market Leadership

The results of this strategy were transformative. During Ganguly's tenure:

- Puma India's revenue grew nearly **five-fold**, reaching close to **₹3,000 crore**
- The brand emerged as the **largest multinational sportswear player in India**
- Puma overtook the combined reported sales of competitors like Adidas, Nike and Reebok in the Indian market

Industry analysts credit this growth to Ganguly's ability to merge **fashion sensibility with sports performance**, a formula that resonated strongly with Gen Z and millennial consumers.

Navigating Challenges

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Ganguly made bold decisions to protect long-term growth. Rather than scaling back, Puma doubled down on **digital engagement, athleisure categories and consumer connectivity**, helping the brand maintain momentum during one of retail's toughest phases.

From Corporate Leader to Entrepreneur

In **2023**, after more than 17 years with Puma, Ganguly stepped down to pursue entrepreneurship. He co-founded **Agilitas Sports**, a venture aimed at strengthening India's sportswear ecosystem through innovation, technology and manufacturing.

The move marked a natural progression—from building a global brand in India to **creating India-origin sports and lifestyle platforms**.

A Lasting Legacy in Indian Retail

Abhishek Ganguly's success story is one of **vision, consistency and cultural insight**. By understanding India's youth mindset and blending sport with fashion, he didn't just grow Puma India—he changed how Indian consumers wear, view and live sportswear.

His journey continues to inspire leaders across fashion, retail and sports industries, proving that when brand strategy meets cultural relevance, transformation follows.

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