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RAJU DEWANI

BUILDING BUTTERFLY AUTHENTICWEAR WITH CONSISTENCY, CRAFT, AND A PREFERENCE FOR SUBSTANCE OVER SPOTLIGHT

Shweta Singh | The CEO Magazine

In the past two decades, India's menswear industry has gone through a drastic change. With changing consumer preferences, expanding retail ecosystems, and the growing demand for brands that balance quality with affordability, the industry has seen the rise of several new labels alongside well-established names. While many brands have captured attention through aggressive expansion and marketing, others have chosen a quieter path focusing instead on product integrity, steady growth, and long-term credibility. Among those who have built their journey in this understated manner is Raju Dewani, Founder and Director of Butterfly Authenticwear, who has spent years building a menswear brand rooted in experience, disciplined thinking, and a deep understanding of the apparel business.

Crafting a Brand on Quality and Credibility

Butterfly Authenticwear represents decades of experience in India's menswear industry, built on a clear philosophy of quality, consistency, and credibility. Since 1998, the brand has focused on strengthening both its manufacturing capabilities and its brand value, steadily developing a reputation for menswear that prioritises fabric excellence, precise fits, and long-term customer satisfaction rather than short-lived trends. Headquartered in Indore, Butterfly operates with a dedicated team across manufacturing, operations, design,

and sales. Its manufacturing strength is supported through in-house facilities as well as a network of trusted channel partners, creating an integrated system that supports both production efficiency and consistent product quality. Backed by more than 25 years of manufacturing heritage in menswear, the company continues to build on its deep understanding of fabrics, fits, and evolving customer expectations.

Positioned as a mid-premium menswear house, Butterfly Authenticwear creates refined clothing for the modern gentleman who appreciates understated sophistication and timeless style. The brand specialises in fine shirts, vacation wear, and elevated essentials crafted from hemp, linen, and premium cotton blends, where comfort, fabric quality, and precision in finish remain central to the product philosophy. Over the years, Butterfly has built a strong presence through partnerships with some of India's most respected retail institutions. Its clientele includes prominent names such as Bindals and Top Shop Chunmun in Delhi; G3+ in Surat; Jaihind in Pune; A3 and G. Sachanand in Indore; Bachhoomall in Agra; and Meena Bazar in Chandigarh. In Mumbai, retailers such as Savidha and Carron further strengthen the brand's presence in one of the country's most competitive fashion markets. The company is also in advanced discussions with reputed South Indian retail institutions such as Seematti in Kerala and Naidu Hall in Chennai, reflecting



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the growing demand for Butterfly in key premium markets. Guided by the mission of delivering premium menswear that combines quality fabrics, comfort, and refined style, Butterfly continues to create long-term value for customers, dealers, and stakeholders alike. Its long-term vision is to build a nationally respected menswear brand known for product integrity, financial strength, and enduring customer trust.

The brand has been built in a calibrated and sustainable manner, with a philosophy that prioritises discipline over rapid expansion. As the company sees it, the goal remains simple: to create menswear that customers feel confident wearing and that dealers feel confident selling. Complementing its retail growth, Butterfly has also developed a strong digital presence, with a social media following of over seven lakh.

The Journey from Retail to Manufacturing

Raju Dewani's journey into the apparel industry began under the guidance of his elder brother, Kailash Dewani, who was already involved in multi-brand clothing retail. After completing his engineering, Raju Dewani joined the business, gaining firsthand exposure to the workings of the retail apparel market and developing a practical understanding of consumer preferences and product demand.

The brothers later expanded into the distribution of premium apparel brands, which gave them deeper on-ground insight into market dynamics, retailer expectations, and emerging product gaps. Over time, they realised that distribution limited them to specific territories, while retail expansion required significant capital investment. Both models, they observed, had natural ceilings for long-term growth. This led them to think strategically.

They chose manufacturing as a backward-integration move, allowing greater control over product, pricing, and quality while also creating the opportunity to build their own brand and expand beyond regional boundaries. What began as a practical business decision gradually evolved into a larger brand vision: to create premium menswear that balances quality, comfort, and accessibility, backed by strong product integrity and dependable supply.

Today, while Kailash Dewani's experience and guidance continue to shape the company's direction, the next generation is also contributing to the brand's evolution. Bhavesh Dewani, Raju Dewani's son and a NIFT Chennai alumnus, brings contemporary design insight to Butterfly Authenticwear.

Choosing Discipline Over Hype

Like much of the apparel industry, Butterfly Authenticwear has had to navigate challenges that have reshaped the market in recent years. Deep discount culture, rising return patterns, and increasing pressure on margins have made it difficult for many brands to sustain profitability. At the same time, several companies have pursued rapid expansion funded by heavy leverage, often operating on minimal or even negative margins.

Butterfly, however, chose a different path. Instead of chasing volume-led growth, the company focused on profitability, inventory discipline, and controlled expansion. By avoiding excessive leverage and strengthening cash flows, the brand built a demand-driven supply model supported by trusted dealer relationships. Prioritising product quality, financial prudence, and long-term brand value over short-term hype allowed the company to convert industry pressures into a stable and sustainable growth strategy. "Our belief is simple: a strong brand is built on consistency, not discounting; on discipline, not debt," says Mr. Dewani.

One of the milestones Mr. Dewani considers most meaningful is the company's ability to grow from its regional retail and distribution roots into a manufacturing-led brand trusted by some of India's leading retailers while maintaining a cautious approach toward debt and expansion. Today, Butterfly operates as a zero-debt company with financial reserves, reflecting the disciplined approach that has guided its growth. The importance of this philosophy became particularly evident during the COVID-19 lockdown period, when the company continued to honour its payment commitments despite widespread uncertainty across the industry. The decision further strengthened trust with partners and reinforced Butterfly's credibility in the market.

Reflecting on the journey, Mr. Dewani believes the experience has shaped his leadership perspective. "Long-term vision always beats short-term gains. Sustainable growth creates real brand equity, and trust remains the strongest currency, with dealers, customers, and teams." For him, leadership is not simply about scaling a business but about building a foundation strong enough to endure industry cycles while continuing to grow responsibly.

Values That Define Butterfly Authenticwear

At the core of Butterfly Authenticwear's journey lies a set of values that have remained constant over the years. With deep roots in manufacturing, the company places strong emphasis on respect for craftsmanship, valuing textile knowledge, skilled workmanship, and continuous



The Next Gen Support Team
- Bhavesh Dewani

improvement in product making. This focus on the fundamentals of fabric and construction continues to guide the brand's product philosophy.

Equally important is the principle of trust and commitment. Whether working with dealers, suppliers, or customers, the company has consistently prioritised honouring its commitments and maintaining strict payment discipline. This approach has helped strengthen long-term relationships across its partner network and reinforce credibility within the industry.

Another defining value is long-term thinking. Rather than chasing short-term hype, every expansion, design decision, and partnership is evaluated from a sustainability perspective. This measured approach has enabled Butterfly to grow steadily while building a reputation for reliability and quiet confidence across the market.

These values also form the foundation of what sets the brand apart in a highly competitive industry. While much of the market is driven by discounting, rapid expansion, and leverage-led growth, Butterfly has remained focused on product integrity, zero-leverage financial discipline, and long-term brand building. Its competitive strength is maintained through consistent quality and fit, demand-driven production planning, continuous fabric and design innovation, and enduring relationships with trusted partners.



Redefining Success

For Butterfly Authenticwear, success has never been defined only by scale or turnover. Instead, the company measures its progress through sustainable growth, brand trust, and financial strength, principles that have guided its decisions over the years. As Mr. Dewani puts it, "Success for Butterfly means building a respected, financially strong and trusted brand that thrives for decades, not just seasons."

Over time, this approach has translated into several meaningful milestones for the company. Butterfly has been recognised for its consistent performance and disciplined business approach, including receiving the Entrepreneur Excellence Unlock Award 2021 by 94.3 MY FM, which acknowledged the brand's resilience, growth, and contribution to the apparel industry during the challenging post-pandemic phase.

Alongside formal recognition, the company's journey has been marked by steady achievements, building a trusted dealer network across India; evolving from retail and distribution roots into a manufacturing-led national brand; maintaining a zero-leverage financial model; and honouring business commitments. Together, these milestones reflect Butterfly's focus on credibility, stability, and long-term value creation.

People at the Heart of the Brand

Butterfly Authenticwear approaches talent in much the same way it builds its brand with a long-term and relationship-driven mindset. In an industry where skills, trust, and continuity play a critical role, the company focuses on creating a stable and respectful work environment where people can grow alongside the organisation.

A key part of this philosophy is growing talent from within. Many team members have been with the company for years, gradually taking on greater responsibility and leadership roles as the business expands. At the same time, the company places strong emphasis on



respect for craftsmanship and experience, recognising that skilled workers form the backbone of manufacturing and must feel valued and secure in their roles. Butterfly also ensures that commitment and performance are recognised through incentives, role growth, and appreciation within the organisation. Beyond the workplace, the company extends support to employees and their families through initiatives such as assistance with children's education and accommodation for eligible staff members. As Mr. Dewani notes, "Some of our staff children are in

government engineering colleges; in fact, one employee's son is playing cricket in the under-19 state team, and the beauty lies in the fact that they recognise the company's efforts in their children's upliftment."

What Lies Ahead for Butterfly Authenticwear

In the coming future, the apparel industry will become more competitive and increasingly polarised. Brands that rely heavily on discounting, leverage, and short-term hype may find it harder to sustain themselves, while the market gradually rewards authentic quality, financial discipline, and real brand value. "In a tougher market, only grounded and disciplined brands will endure," says Mr. Dewani. "Our strategy is simple: stay credible, stay profitable and stay relevant."

To stay ahead of industry shifts, Butterfly focuses on a balanced approach that combines market awareness, product understanding, and disciplined decision-making. The company works closely with its network of more than 600 dealers and retailers to gather structured market feedback while building forecasts based on sales patterns, repeat orders, and category movement. Global fashion intelligence also plays a role, with the team regularly studying international trade and fashion publications, alongside professional design inputs from NIFT-trained talent to track evolving consumer preferences.

At present, the company's focus is on strengthening Butterfly as a nationally respected premium menswear brand while preserving its core principles of product quality, zero-leverage discipline, and partner trust. This includes further premiumisation of its product range, refined brand presentation through advanced catalogues and lookbooks, demand-driven production planning, calibrated expansion into new markets, and deeper integration of digital tools and technology. Together, these efforts reflect the company's aim to make Butterfly more premium, more trusted, and more future-ready through steady, disciplined progress rather than rushed expansion.

Leadership Mantra

Offering advice to aspiring entrepreneurs in the apparel industry, Mr. Dewani says, "My biggest advice is simple: trust the process. The apparel business rewards patience, consistency, and learning from the ground up – not shortcuts. Many newcomers get attracted by big showrooms, rapid expansion, and impressive topline numbers. But in reality, the topline can look glamorous while the bottom line tells the truth. A business survives on profitability and cash flow, not on turnover alone."