

South Africa key to Cotton On's African growth

The Cotton On Group has officially launched its regional headquarters in South Africa, cementing its commitment to South Africa as the cornerstone of its operations in the region. The group also celebrated its 100th store opening in South Africa, defining the region as the fastest growing of all 17 countries in which the group operates.



The Cotton On Group welcomed guests to Katy's Palace Bar in Sandton to celebrate some of the exciting milestones the group has reached in South Africa including its 100th store opening and launch of its Johannesburg head quarters.

The Australian group, considered one of the fastest growing retail groups in the world, has grown its South African operation from one store and a workforce of 15 people in 2011 to 1300 people, selling 25 million units to 7.5 million customers, since commencement.

"Johannesburg is our first regional office outside our headquarters in Australia and has now paved the way for the opening of our regional offices in the US and Singapore," says Michael Hardwick, Cotton On Group chief financial officer.

"South Africa plays a critical role in the ongoing success of our business and is a key contributor to the 30% growth we have achieved globally for the past three years. In 2013, the group opened 27 stores in 27 days in the lead up to Christmas, surpassing R1 billion in sales."

Future growth within Africa and beyond

With no plans to slow down, the group intends its 100 stores to become 300 in the region and the team of 1300 people to grow to 3000 within five years. "South Africa is rich with talented, innovative and forward thinking individuals. Our team here play a crucial role in shaping why South Africa is set to become a driving force in cementing our plans for future growth, both within Africa and beyond," says Johan van Wyk, Cotton On Group South African country manager.

"For the group, the successful expansion of our operations is underpinned by the guiding principles: invest in people, ideas, leadership and resources and do this in countries such as South Africa that are led by people who share the same

like-minded principles," he concludes.

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