

Functional wear stays smart all day

TAL APPAREL

Tal Apparel looks beyond manufacturing and design to grow its garment business. Innovation through continuous investment in research and development is key to producing clothes that combine style, comfort and functionality, according to Roger Lee, senior manager of the group.

Mr Lee said Tal was a world leader in garment technologies, providing cutting-edge treatments for exceptional performance in everyday apparel such as wrinkle-free shirts and washable wool clothes. "Our customers like to have clothes that are functional and easy to care for," Mr Lee said. "No dry cleaning is necessary and they can stay smart with their wrinkle-free shirt throughout the day.

"Our SofTAL Wool process enables us to provide machine washable and dryable wool garments. We are innovating continuously."

In business for about 60 years, Tal has production facilities in various Southeast Asian countries and employs more than 25,000 people. Apart from innovation, the company is adding value through advanced supply chain solutions to create shorter lead time, quicker response to market trends, effective inventory management and reduced costs.

Mr Lee said the group worked in close partnership with customers in supply chain management to provide a stock replenishment solution through joint planning and forecasting on sales and inventory.

With its specially designed "vendor managed inventory" service, Tal could directly monitor the customers' warehouses and stores, thus improving operational efficiency, he said.

"We will be able to forecast future stock demand based on data of the customer's points of sale to ensure efficient supply chain management," he said.

"Trust is key to the success of this solution because customers have to give us access to data and control to manage stock replenishment."

Mr Lee also said Tal's sophisticated pack-and-ship-to-store systems helped reduce

warehousing of inventory and shortened the lead time from order to store.

"All products are packed at our factories according to customers' specific requirements," he said. "When they reach our customers' distribution centres, they can simply be scanned and loaded straight to the despatch truck for immediate shipment."

This is to ensure that garments are delivered quickly and cost effectively, and that the shelves of customers are always stocked with the garments most in demand.

Mr Lee said the awards scheme provided a good benchmark for Tal to review its own operations and compare practices with other world-class organisations.

"We will continue to focus on what customers need to build our business so that we can compete internationally." *Kenneth Ko*