Market
The apparel industry in Sri Lanka, one of the country’s highest foreign-exchange earners for several decades, has weathered many storms over the years. Although a plethora of local companies were involved in the manufacture of garments for global brands, few companies have been able to sustain the momentum, and create new opportunities to build an enduring organization. Confronted by the elimination of the Multi-Fibre Agreement (MFA) at the end of 2005, many of these companies wilted under the pressure of dwindling margins and competition from emerging markets. As the global apparel-manufacturing market became more sophisticated, there was a shakeout— not least in Sri Lanka, where only the preferred manufacturing partners for large global brands survived the challenging market forces. MAS is one such story.

Apparel manufacturing has evolved through the years from vendors outsourcing simple cut-and-sew operations to working with integrated-solution providers. MAS embraced the evolving vendor-supplier relationship, undertaking functions that had previously been the prerogative of the vendor, allowing the latter to focus on their resources in managing retail and consumer relationships.

As South Asia’s largest intimate-apparel manufacturer, MAS also happens to be the region’s largest-grossing supplier of sportswear. The company manages the entire value chain—from product design, development, manufacturing, distribution, and consumptionsupply—while commanding the latest technology and know-how. With its in-house research, design, development and product-engineering capabilities, Schickel, and the concept-to-delivery solutions to its customers.

Design and product development is the new heart of the business—a sphere in which MAS excels. By working with some of the world’s leading concepts or design briefs to create new product ranges, MAS has been able to make new technology and products—often in multi-year efforts that redefine the industry. Innovation is a key aspect of MAS, which works from working with Victoria’s Secret on last replacement models to lean manufacturing, the company’s fully-integrated model allows it to innovate across the value chain.

Today, MAS is the lead strategic partner for Victoria’s Secret (US), servicing numerous global brands including Marks & Spencer (M&S), Triumph International (Demark Apparel), Nike, Speedo, adidas, Reebok, GAP and Banana Republic. It operates design studios and 28 facilities across five countries with a family of over 45,000 people.

Achievements
Led by progressive and visionary leader Chamekara Mahesh Amalaka, MAS pioneered and perfected the manufacture of lingerie in a country that specialised in casual wear and outerwear. From an entrepreneurial venture, MAS has grown to be a global entity with a consolidated annual turnover of approximately US$ 750 million with an annual growth rate of 15%-20% over the past two decades. MAS is set to achieve its target of US$ 1 billion revenues by 2017.

True to its spirit of excelling in every aspect of the business, MAS has won numerous awards throughout its journey, including 55 Asia Star National Productivity, 37 Sohka Quality and HR awards. Last year, MAS won the coveted Vendor of the Year award from Victoria’s Secret, the award for Outstanding Performance and Innovation from Nike and the Award for Most Innovative Supplier from adidas, while MAS Intimates was presented with the Award for Customer Excellence for its implementation of SAP R/3. MAS was the first in the region to use the SAP R/3 Apparel and Footwear system, and launched a global SAP consulting firm focusing entirely on the apparel and footwear industry.

The company has a history of partnering with vendors in community initiatives, including plotting the Masters & Start programme to empower people with disabilities, promoting fair trade and organic cotton products with Victoria’s Secret, sustainability education with GAP and tsunami reconstruction supported by customers and well-wishers.

A demonstrated commitment towards employee well-being, safety and working conditions, earned the company’s recognition as one of the Top 50 Companies in Sri Lanka for Social Accountability in the 2008 Corporate Responsibility (CSR) awards. Leveraging its best practices in employee well-being, MAS launched a unique CSR initiative in 2004, titled MAS Women Go Beyond. The programme seeks to empower women employees by supporting them with training and development to advance in their careers while successfully balancing their personal lives. They are recognised and rewarded for their accomplishments and developed as role models for others to emulate.

The initiative won the American Apparel & Footwear Association Award for Excellence in CSR in 2005. In 2006, INSAS (France) used it to model a case study for Strategic CSR in the apparel industry for its MBA and Advanced Management Program. The programme is also supported by the London and Copenhagen Business Schools (UK) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, US).

MAS has won international acclaim through the UN Global Compact for best practices in governance, human rights and decent work. The world-renowned supply chain has held position #1 in Sri Lanka and the region for the last five years. The company’s performance in apparel and sportswear, MAS Linea Aqua, a partnership concern with Speedo International, is also ranked amongst the top 15 companies in the region according to the Financial Times/RobecoSAM 2010 Corporate Sustainability Index. In 2010, the company was ranked 45th in the world and 14th in Asia by the Global 100 list of the most sustainable companies in the world.

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Product
The business model is a combination of designing and manufacturing. For 17 years, the company has been manufacturing for global brands—constantly launching new innovation in its portfolio of investments including the development of integrated apparel and fabric parks in the region. Today, the company represents the balance it strives to achieve in its target of US$ 1 billion revenues by 2017.

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