

A Brazilian Water-Sports Brand Gets a Place Under Global Sun

Contributed by Isaura Daniel
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Mormaii, the main Brazilian neoprene surf clothes and water-sports brand, sells its products in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Croatia, Albania, Germany, Spain, Italy, Portugal, France, Israel, Mexico, Panama, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Argentina, Paraguay, Chile, Uruguay, England and Austria.

Exports, however, have not yet reached 10% of company revenues, according to Valter Tomazzoni, the manager of JR Apamver, the company that produces the brand glasses.

Apart from surf clothes, Mormaii produces over 2,500 products like sunglasses, clothes and sports shoes, backpacks and equipment for surf and windsurf.

Mormaii is based in the city of Garopaba, in the southern Brazilian state of Santa Catarina, and has revenues of over US\$ 30 million a year.

In Brazil and abroad there are around 40 companies licensed to produce brand products. International licensees are present in Mexico, Portugal and Argentina, and there will soon also be one in Germany.

Mormaii is starting to enter the Arab market. Last year, the company representative in Europe, Africa and Asia, based in Spain, made his first sale to a distributor in Saudi Arabia.

"It was a small export of sunglasses for market testing," stated distributor Luis Hoffer. Now the company is also negotiating with buyers in the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait.

Tomazzoni stated that Mormaii has great interest in selling and establishing partnerships with the Arab countries. The brand representative in Spain is trying to introduce the products to the region, not only glasses, but also other products like diving clothes.

The best-known Mormaii products are surf clothes, but the sport is not popular in the Middle East and North Africa.

The Mormaii sunglasses division is currently expanding, according to Tomazzoni. Last year business grew 130%, explained the company commercial manager.

As occurs in the remaining areas of the company, exports of glasses have not yet reached 10% of revenues. "This year they should reach 25%," forecasted Tomazzoni. The company is growing at an average of 25% a year.

Despite currently being a prominent player on the domestic scenery and of being present as a sponsor of most radical sports competitions, such as surf and freefall, Mormaii was born small.

The company was born in the 1970's, when doctor Marco Aurélio Raymundo started making neoprene clothes in the garage of his house in Garopaba for his personal use. Marco Aurélio liked surfing and thought that the water at the beach he had moved to, Garopaba, was very cold.

Requests by friends and shop owners showed Marco Aurélio, known as Morongo, that there was market for his clothes. At the time they were sold for a relatively high price, between US\$ 740 and US\$ 1,100, as in the country the only similar products were imported.

Nowadays, Mormaii has around 150 employees at the company head office and is present in sports clothes stores throughout Brazil. Apart from that, there are 30 franchises spread around Brazil and abroad. There are also brand stores in Argentina, Chile, Hawaii and Portugal.

Mormaii
www.mormaii.com.br

Translated by Mark Ament

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