

They Produce 300,000 Balls a Month. No Wonder, Cambuci Is Brazil's Biggest Ball Maker

Contributed by Isaura Daniel
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The greatest Brazilian ball manufacturer, Cambuci, owner of the brand of sporting articles Penalty, is in search of a distributor for their products in the Arab world.

The company had exported to countries such as Bahrain, Qatar and emirates about seven years ago, through a local representative, but sales weren't continued. Now, however, Cambuci plans on retaking the market.

"We want a distributor in the business, who has experience and access to sporting retail and to do a more consistent job," says the company's trader, Marcello Cavarzere.

Penalty is one of the most popular brands of sporting articles in Brazil and manufactures from balls to sporting uniforms, football shoes and accessories such as gloves, shinguards and knee protectors.

"We see the Middle East as a market very tuned to our product. We know the Arabs identify themselves with the Brazilian style of playing ball. There are many opportunities there. They like the sport and they like Brazil," states Cavarzere.

Cambuci is already negotiating the distribution with a company in the United Arab Emirates, but the partnership still hasn't been settled yet. The aim is to establish a distributor as soon as possible.

Cambuci manufactures 300,000 balls and 3,000 shirts per month. The company owns three factory units, two in the northeastern Brazilian state of Bahia, manufacturing balls and textile articles, and another in the state of Paraiba, also in the Northeast, manufacturing shoes.

Currently, between 15% and 20% of the production goes to the international market. In 2006, the company wants to start exporting between 20% and 25%.

Brazilian Ball

Fifteen countries are part of the list of permanent buyers of the Penalty brand abroad. There are clients in South America, Central America, Africa, Europe and Japan.

The main markets, however, are Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia, Chile and Venezuela. According to the trader, the popularity of Brazilian football helps to sell the brand abroad.

"We have already sponsored Conmebol (South American Football Confederation) and the Libertadores Cup and to this day we are remembered in Peru, Chile and Paraguay for such sponsorships," says Cavarzere.

Both in Brazil and abroad, Penalty competes with international brands such as Nike, Adidas, Reebok and Umbro. Great part of the production of these brands is in China, which is the case of sporting shoes, and in Pakistan, case of the balls. The Cambuci balls are made of polyurethane and vinyl and the football shoes both in natural as synthetic leather.

Some shoes are manufactured in China by outsourced suppliers. According to Cavarzere, these are products that demand a production system for which the company is not equipped.

Lebanese

Penalty has exported for about 20 years. Ten years ago, however, they transformed the sector by structuring the export department. Cambuci opened a long time before, however, in 1945, as Malharia Cambuci, by Eduardo and Victorio Estefano, sons of the Lebanese immigrant Sarhan Tuma Estefano.

Sarhan himself had already worked in the textile sector, establishing a sewing workshop for his wife, Assibe. She died however, a long time before Cambuci was opened.

The brand Penalty was created in 1970 and entered the market with products directed to football. Today, there are football articles as well as for other sporting activities such as handball, volleyball and basketball. The brand Penalty normally appears as a sponsor in the sporting world.

Currently they are sponsoring the Brazilian Basketball National Team, the Brazilian Handball National Team, the Coritiba Football Club and the Fortaleza, among others. The company also sponsors clubs, national teams and confederations abroad.

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