

THE BENETTON GROUP

Today, the Benetton Group is present in 120 countries around the world. Its core business is clothing: a group with a strong Italian character whose style, design expertise and passion are clearly seen in the fashion-orientated United Colors of Benetton and Sisley brands; in The Hip Site, the brand for teenagers; and in sportswear brands Playlife and Killer Loop. The Group produces over 110 million garments every year, 90% of which is manufactured in Europe. Its retail network of 5,000 stores around the world is increasingly focused on large floor-space point of sale offering high quality customer services and now generates an annual turnover of 2.1 billion euros, net of retail sales.

The development of Benetton's commercial organisation has been supported by a major programme of investment in megastores, some of which are directly managed by the Group. These stores are characterised by their large dimensions, their prestigious locations in historic and commercial centres and by the high level of customer services they offer. The new Benetton megastores carry complete casual womenswear, menswear, childrenswear and underwear collections, as well as a wide selection of accessories, offering a full range of Benetton style and quality.

As in the case of the commercial network, a constant commitment to innovation, a crucial factor for development, has always characterised the Group's business organisation, from communication to IT, from research into new materials to integrated logistics. Special attention is given to innovation in production, where all systems and equipment are totally renewed every five years. Benetton production system is co-ordinated by a high-tech facility at Castrette (Treviso), which is one of the most advanced clothing-manufacturing complexes in the world.

Despite its global spread, the Benetton Group has maintained close relations with its local origins, especially through cultural activities of the Fondazione Benetton Studi e Ricerche and through programmes about sport. From its involvement in rugby, volleyball and basketball, to its legendary victories in Formula One, Benetton's interpretation of sport has focused, besides athletic excellence, above all on its social aspects such as meeting, sharing and physical wellbeing; all these aspects result in introducing thousands of young people every year to the world of sport.

The Group's ability to engage with society is also evident in Fabbrica, Benetton's communication research centre. Fabbrica's challenge is both an innovative and international one. It is a way of marrying culture and industry, using communications which no longer rely only on the usual forms of advertising, but transmit "industrial culture" and the company's "intelligence" through other means: design, music, cinema, photography, publishing, Internet. Fabbrica has chosen to cultivate the hidden creativity of young artists/researchers from all over the world. Following careful selection, they are invited to develop concrete communication projects, under the direction of some of the main players in these areas.