

You are here » [Home](#) » [My Brands](#)

Godrej redesigns nano fridge

By Yassir Pitalwalla Jul 05 2010 , Mumbai

Tags: News

The Godrej group, which at present is test marketing a nano refrigerator christened 'ChotuKool' for the rural markets, has redesigned the revolutionary product in terms on functionality and form based on customer feedback in pilot trials in parts of Marathawada, Latur, Osmanabad, Pune and other interior parts of Maharashtra, in addition to parts of Karnataka.

Based on customer feedback, the company has worked on its design to make it look pretty and aspirational even though it's targeted at the bottom-of-the-pyramid customer.

"We have also engineered the appliance to now drop the ambient temperature inside to 28 degrees below the outside room temperature instead of 20 degrees," said a top Godrej official familiar with the development.

Godrej plans to offer two versions of ChotuKool. A 30-litre version will be priced at Rs 3,000 while the 45-litre one will be priced around Rs 3,500. The 12-volt battery run ChotuKool will weigh around 7.8 kg and will not make ice as it runs on cooling chips instead of a compressor.

"Rural customers want to store food and milk and chill drinking water. They don't need ice that much, so a 180-litre fridge is not required. The Rs 3,500 ChotuKool meets their need of something convenient that also has a low running cost," said the Godrej official.

Godrej has also tied up with NGOs such as Swayam Shiksan Prasthan and Pratham to leverage their network of community workers to sell these products in rural area for a commission.

It's also tying up with some microfinance institutions for financing the purchase of the fridge by rural customers. Godrej has found that apart from homes, small entrepreneurs who have seen the product at rural fairs too are using ChotuKool. Some paanwallahs use it to sell 'thanda paans' while others use it to sell chilled water along with 'vada pays'. The company is also developing a version that can be used by chemists and primary healthcare centres for storing vaccines, etc.

"A version of ChotuKool is also being developed for urban markets where we feel this can be used as a noiseless fridge to be kept in one's chamber or bedroom for cold drinks and wate," said the official.

No home theatres, DVD: Meanwhile, the Godrej group, which had announced its big bang entry into the home electronics category that is dominated by the likes of Samsung and LG, has withdrawn its DVD players from the market. "We have stopped the DVD category as we are not focussed on this business," a top Godrej & Boyce official said.

The company has also simultaneously decided against entering the home theatre category which it was reportedly eyeing. This is because home theatres are normally sold as an upgrade product for DVD player owners. So, with the decision to withdraw from the hyper competitive DVD market, an entry into home theatres too has been scrapped, said officials involved with the decision.

"The focus in the home electronics business for us is on the service experience. We will have to create a separate service channel for home electronics which is different from the existing service channel for air-conditioners and refrigerators," said a top Godrej Appliance official.

This is why the company has been cautious in expanding the rollout of the television business to a pan India launch despite spending over a year taking customer feedback in South India.