

## IDFS at 30: A Moroccan pioneer

By **Hibah Noor** on October, 29 2019 | Retailers



Newly extended Terminal 1 at Casablanca Mohammed V Airport, where IDFS more than doubled its retail square footage

International Duty Free Shops (IDFS) is celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2019 as the first and leading duty free retailer in Morocco in partnership with the Office National des Aeroports (ONDA). True to its tried-and-tested philosophy of global expertise and best prices, the company has strengthened its presence in its airport stronghold of Casablanca.

In January 2019, the operator began trading at the newly extended Terminal 1 at Casablanca Mohammed V Airport, where it more than doubled its retail square footage. The Level 1 store, a smaller outlet that caters to transit passengers, increased by 396 square meters, while the L2 shop, situated one level up in the boarding area, grew by 547 square meters. Before the T1 expansion, the shops covered 812.69 square meters and now span a total of 1,755 square meters.

Last year, Casablanca Mohammed V International Airport counted 4.3 million passengers. T1 is dedicated to two airlines: Royal Air Maroc and Emirates. Some 60% of passengers are carried by Royal Air Maroc, and the other 40% are from all the other airlines.

Since its opening in January, the airport has gone through a transition period of continuous improvements. Recently, new signage has been installed directing travelers from check-in to departure, easing the stress of travel. Speed, flexibility and comfort in arrivals became the airport's

focus, with the opening of a dedicated area for Moroccan nationals that is designed to ease the processing of all nationals into Morocco. The new T1 terminal is an extension of the old facility and the new duty free stores are located in this additional space.



Christopher Tantoco, IDFS' President

IDFS prides itself on being customer oriented. In a major development, the retailer is bringing Benefit Cosmetics to Morocco and is the first company to showcase the brand, as it's not available on the domestic market. "Part of our goal is to introduce new cosmetics brands and be the first to launch in Moroccan duty free. We are very happy with this new partnership with Benefit Cosmetics and its support to launch with IDFS," says Christopher Tantoco,

IDFS' President. The brand will be available this November in its main airport shops. "Aside from its popularity, Benefit is a good addition to the IDFS portfolio as we aim to grow our cosmetics offering; attracting shoppers, the strong name will draw potential customers into the store for a full look," he explains.

#### Aligning with trends

The company's top-performing product category remains tobacco and cigarettes, followed by perfumes. In comparison to other countries, the distribution and performance of tobacco products is much higher in Morocco. IDFS notes that the popularity of tobacco is driving overall sales and is the reason for the growth of its other categories. "Our goal is to grow other categories and make new introductions, especially in terms of fashion brands, food brands and local brands," says Tantoco.

When it comes to food brands, IDFS is focusing on snacking options, items that are easy to pick up off the shelf, as well as the introduction of healthy snacking options that align with the lifestyle and well-being trend. This development aims to cater to different customers' preferences and is in the works for 2020.

IDFS recently introduced Loacker biscuits and Wright Tea to its confectionery category. Popular with Europeans, locals and Asians, the cookies are performing well and the tea - despite its British name, it is locally-owned - is available in cafes in Morocco and is exclusive to airports via IDFS. It currently offers the high-end brand's loose leaf tea, with its tea bags and tea champagne in the pipeline.

The overall product assortment is also designed to increase the customers' choice of currency options. The retailer has expanded its portfolio of local products in the categories of snacking, gifting, toys, and souvenirs to carry a wider selection of products which customers can buy using the local currency of Moroccan Dirhams.



This month, IDFS will be reviving its diplomatic business and serving the community through a digital platform: a new online ordering service where customers can browse through its catalog and place their orders online to enjoy diplomatic prices. "We have received overwhelming feedback from the community, which only highlights the strong relationships we have built as the pioneers of duty free shopping in Morocco for over 30 years," enthuses Tantoco.