

# WINNING FORMULA

■ STYLE BASICS ■ +J

■ JAPANESE DENIM ■ EDITORS' PICKS



## MR FASHION

Tadashi Yanai,  
Uniqlo's CEO

Innovative, well designed and increasingly dominant, Japanese clothing brand Uniqlo is fast emerging as the Apple or Google of the fashion industry. It has become the benchmark other labels aspire to, thanks to a successful combination of price, quality and stylish design



**UNI  
QLO**

Uniqlo's mission statement is very simple: "made for all". Tadashi Yanai, the company's founder and CEO, has a more difficult personal mission. "I want Uniqlo to be number one in the world," he says.

Now the richest man in Japan, Yanai is well on his way to achieving both the above aims. Since opening his first Unique Clothing Warehouse in 1984 at the age of 35, his well-named company Fast Retailing has expanded rapidly to become a £10bn business with 1,000 Uniqlo stores worldwide. The company is growing so fast that a Uniqlo University is being built in Tokyo, to train 1,500 store managers a year.

The Uniqlo way of conducting business travels extremely well. "We don't want the hard sell. We cannot be too pushy," says Yanai. "We want to make customers feel comfortable to make the purchase."

Which they do in their billions. Sales grew by 19% in the year to August 2010, having increased by 17% the previous year despite the recession.

If you want reliably classic and stylish wardrobe staples that represent excellent value for money, then Uniqlo is for you. Yanai prioritises long-term style and quality over fickle throwaway fashion. "We want our clothes to be well made and not too trend driven, so that they will last more than one season," he says.

That's not to say functional cannot be fashionable. The +J range has a cult following. "Japanese men are the most stylish casual dressers in the world," says Yanai. "We exploit that. It works particularly well now that business dress is becoming more casual."

All in all, it's a winning formula of low price, high quality and lasting style - made for all. >

**Yanai's aim for his company is ambitious: "I want to be number one in the world," he says**

