

Apple to shake up int'l biz management to focus on India

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Apple is reshuffling management of its international businesses to put a bigger focus on India, according to people with knowledge of the matter.

The shift will mark the first time that India becomes a sales region for Apple, which has seen a demand surge in the country. That will give India increased prominence inside the tech giant, according to the people, who asked not to be identified because the move hasn't been announced.

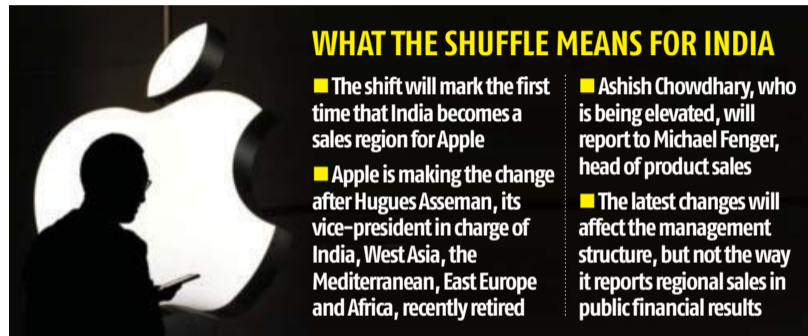
Apple is making the change after its vice-president in charge of India, the Middle East, the Mediterranean, East Europe and Africa — Hugues Asseman — recently retired. With his departure, the iPhone maker is promoting its head

of India, who reported to Asseman. That executive, Ashish Chowdhary, will report directly to Michael Fenger, Apple's head of product sales.

A company spokesman declined to comment.

The company posted record revenue in India last quarter, even as its total sales slipped 5 per cent. Apple has created an online store to serve the region and is planning to open its first retail outlets in the country later this year. On the last earnings call, Chief Executive Officer Tim Cook said the company was putting “a lot of emphasis on the market” and compared the current state of its work in India to its early years in China.

“We are, in essence, taking what we learned in China years ago and how we scale to China and bringing that to bear,”



WHAT THE SHUFFLE MEANS FOR INDIA

■ The shift will mark the first time that India becomes a sales region for Apple

■ Apple is making the change after Hugues Asseman, its vice-president in charge of India, West Asia, the Mediterranean, East Europe and Africa, recently retired

■ Ashish Chowdhary, who is being elevated, will report to Michael Fenger, head of product sales

■ The latest changes will affect the management structure, but not the way it reports regional sales in public financial results

he said. China generates roughly \$75 billion a year for Apple, making it the company's biggest sales region after the Americas and Europe.

In addition to serving as a sales engine for Apple, India is also becoming more critical to the company's product devel-

opment. Key suppliers are moving to the region, and Apple is working with manufacturing partner Hon Hai Precision Industry Co, also known as Foxconn, to set up new iPhone production facilities in the country, Bloomberg News has reported.

The latest changes will affect Apple's management structure but not the way it reports regional sales in public financial results. In those statements, the company includes India as part of its Europe category, along with the Middle East and Africa. It also breaks out four other regions: the Americas, Greater China, Japan and the rest of Asia Pacific.

Asseman's departure is part of a surge in executives leaving the company in recent months.

Apple's vice-president in charge of subscription services stepped down earlier this year, and its cloud chief is planning to depart next month. Last year, top executives in charge of industrial design, procurement, parts of software and hardware engineering, privacy, information systems, and the online store all announced their exits.

Asseman, a two-decade-plus veteran of the company, split his time between Apple's office in London and its base in Cupertino, California. He started off as a marketing manager handling the Mac and iPod lines. He later led retail teams before becoming Apple's iPhone sales chief for Europe and other international markets in 2011. Asseman started his latest role in 2015 and retired at the end of last year.

Apple's sales and international teams are split between Fenger and another vice president, Doug Beck. Fenger oversees hardware, services and enterprise sales globally, while Beck is in charge of the health, education and government segments. Both executives report to Cook, but neither are showcased alongside the CEO's other direct lieutenants on Apple's website.

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