

-leader in graphic arts equipments sales

Distributing and taking products to the users is as important as their manufacturing, which makes distributors an integral part of the product offering chain in any segment of the market. In Indian printing industry where most of the high-end equipments are sourced from overseas, the role of distributors becomes more significant. That's why not only those equipments manufacturers have their distributors in India who don't have their own presence in the country but also many of those having operation locally. Falling in these lines, representing some of leading brands for CtPs, wide format printers, sheetfed and web/heatset commercial presses, and digital printing equipments to deliver world class solutions to Indian customers, Insight Communications has been a consistent performer and leads amongst print machinery distributors in India with a unique distinction of being a market leader in all its business segments. SK Khurana, editor, Print & Publishing, recently met Ajay Aggarwal, CEO, Insight Print Communications to know the recipes for their success in distributorship. Insight Print Communications Pvt Ltd is a synonym for success in the Indian print industry, having installed over 1,700 print and allied equipments in India during the last decade and enjoying major market share. Established in the year 1991 and presently led by Ajay Aggarwal, CEO with promoters Ravi Dugal, Nechalraj Singh Ahluwalia, Angelo Lima Fernandes, and Sangam Khanna, the company started their winning journey from Mumbai initially distributing imagesetters from Ulte (Heidelberg). "During the short period of its dealership from 1992 to 1997, we installed around 100 units of these imagesetters across the country. Such outstanding performance for Ulte earned fame for us as an efficient distributor in India," conveyed Ajay, adding that for the first six years, they were operating from Mumbai only but later in 1997, the company expanded their operation to pan-India presence, including Delhi, Chennai, Pune, and Kolkata. In the year 1997, Insight became distributors for Scitex (Scitex became 'Creo Scitex' in the year 2000, 'Creo' in 2002 and finally part of Kodak in the year 2003). Generally, there were two types of imagesetters: 'drum' type and 'flatbad' type. The drum imagesetters from Scitex were expensive compared to the capstan imagesetters, and it was really a challenge to sell an expensive machine compared to the competitors' offerings. But not only Insight succeeded in convincing customers on their value proposition, and became leaders in imagesetter sales – the DOLEV brand of imagesetters became the largest selling brand in India and also later, many second hand DOLEVs came into the Indian market as imagesetters became synonymous to DOLEVs.

Strengthening with signage solutions



To ensure their share in the new emerging market for signages and billboards, Insight entered in this segment becoming distributors of Scitex Vision, and sold their first high-end machines to AutoGraphics and Macromedia. These machines were in the range of 5,00,000 USD in those days and not easy to sell. It was always a challenge to sell against the very economical Chinese solvent machines. “To effectively increase our installation base in wide format segment, we aggressively promoted back-to-back printing concept, which was then possible only with Scitex printers, and understanding this feature Vodafone and Airtel branding created mass requirement of prints. This resulted in Scitex brand of wide-format machines becoming the largest installed high-end branded machines in India and took us from fifth position in the country to the first position over time. Later on Scitex Vision was bought over by HP and we continued to maintain our leadership position. So far, we have installed around 300 Scitex printers in the country,” said Ajay.

Enhancing scope for market leadership with CtP

As traditional imagesetters became outdated with the advent of CtP systems, “We started marketing CtPs and sold the first Kodak thermal CtP in 2001, and achieved the impressive installation base of around 300 CtPs across the country. Here again, it has been a tough challenge to compete against the cheaper offerings from violet CtPs, defining clearly the value proposition and making the users realize that in the long-term the return on investment is better and assured with us, that kept us busy with orders.”

Ajay explained further, “It is easy to sell by being the lowest priced in the market, but we have always sold the best of the equipments which never came cheap. Whether it was drum imagesetters, high-end solvent machines, CtPs, offset machines – all our products have been world’s best – and we could achieve market leadership with these. It proves that Indian customers do not always buy the cheapest, they buy the BEST. We have not been able to take up distributorship of any Chinese made equipments up to now, not that I want to generalize, but somehow we were not convinced about many equipments, that we evaluated from chinese manufacturers. Also Insight has never been in the business of selling pre-owned equipments from overseas – as we were never convinced ourselves that it can bring a high degree of satisfaction to our customers. We believe in giving the best equipment and also providing the best service to match and enhance customer value. So the fundamental requirement is the product / equipment has to be good, once this fundamental thing is in place, then proper services and healthy ROI can surely bring a delight to whoever buys machines from us.”

Continuing to diversify operations

In a bid to diversify, Insight also ventured in press segment in the year 2006 becoming distributors for Komori press for north and east India. “In the last five years, we are leading the market in our region with around 60 new presses installed leaving all the three German manufacturers behind. When we started in 2006, Komori had no installations and Heidelberg, Roland, KBA and Mitsubishi were the lead sellers. From ‘zero’ installations to becoming the market leader has been a rather satisfying journey,” said Ajay who feels that with Yen at its all

time high, it is difficult, but he is still confident because of the new H-UV technology introduced by Komori. As per Sangam Khanna, director Komori division, “HUV will revolutionize the way high-end value added printing is going to happen in future.”

Targetting high volume print-on-demand (POD) in book printing segment, this year the company has gone a step forward and tied up for high-end digital inkjet web press from Dainippon Screen. “With entry level investment of one million dollar upwards, the first sale is yet to happen,” shared Ajay. Moving forward, with the advent of ebooks and iPads, Ajay feels, that in a few years from now, most short run book publishing will move to digital and leave only the very high volume, text books, magazines etc. to be printed by offset. “What happened to music industry, land line telephones, and photographic film cameras will happen to book printing and publishing sooner or later,” he exemplified.

Core values and ethos

While asking Ajay secrets behind Insight’s success and its consistent performance, leadership position over last 15 years and this is what the reply came, “We have always been a customer centric organization, focus on service has been the key reason for the respect that Insight has in the market. Our philosophy has been that our customer has to win. Only when he wins, we do win. So, we have always been careful of the product that we choose to sell, which has to be the best and has to deliver the return on investment (ROI) faster. Other reason is focus, we have ensured strong focus and commitment to each of our relationships /divisions with dedicated teams, creating unique value propositions, hand holding the customers, meeting customer’s customers to understand their needs, etc. We do not believe in having a big list of tie-ups or distributing a competitive product from two different principals – as this, by default, means lack of focus in the first case and confusion in second situation. As mentioned earlier, we are into high-end products which are not cheapest in their class. One can be successful with multiple relationships, only if your offering is the cheapest. Also, we have been slow and steady – like playing a test match and in for a long innings, and this shapes our long term policies as well. At times, many resort to short term gains, which we try not to get attracted towards. Our major strength has been our team members, we perhaps have the lowest attrition rate in the industry. We believe in creating an environment – which induces our people to give their best. Our engineers literally provide 24x7 support to our customers. This is a unique combination of professionalism and flexibility provided to our customers.”

Striving ahead

Insight’s growth factor has primarily been based on very strong after sales service support. In their staff of around 100 individuals, over fifty percent are engineers, ensuring each and every machine sold gets trained workforce for service. Insight uses SAP and Sales force for CRM and perhaps is one of the few organizations in the print industry - who have invested in these high-end processes. “Striving ahead in the current year we target to sell around 100 CtP systems, 30-40 wide format printers, 25 Komori presses, and 04 digital engines,” concluded Ajay with a vision of growth.

