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How a Singaporean company managed to set up shop in India

India, with its thriving industrial sector, is certainly an appropriate market to explore for a company that distributes and builds industrial automation components.

One such company, Ultra Industrial Automation (UIA), had its sight set on India, when it began participating in related industry exhibitions there. Through these first forays into India, UIA was able to gauge the market and to appoint a local distributor.

In late 2006 the company officially entered India as a representative office with two main objectives:

- to identify potential agents to represent and distribute UIA products in India; and
- to develop distribution networks in the Indian sub-continent.

Since then UIA has worked closely with the distributor to increase the company's sales revenue and to create awareness on the brand and its products in India.

"With a representative office there, we are able to guide and train our distributor on our products and business model. This is one of the crucial steps to be successful," Jacky Tan, Engineering Director for UIA, said.

He added that the distributor even visited the UIA factory in Singapore to meet the engineering and technical staff that would be supporting them offshore.

But venturing into India was not always smooth sailing for UIA, especially in the early stages of their expansion plan. Recruitment proved to be a challenge for the company. New to India's employment system, UIA needed assistance in navigating legal issues and getting the appropriate people to interview.

The company engaged the services of Human Touch, a Singapore-based business consultancy that specialises in market access, venture marketing, information technology and talent management.

According to Tan, not only has Human Touch provided sound advice on nearly all aspects of doing business in India, they have also helped UIA in complying with the Indian government's requirements.

"We tried to do it ourselves initially, but we faced numerous obstacles in dealing with the Indian embassy. With Human Touch's advice and assistance, we were able to expedite the process," Tan said.

Because the company is expanding into India in phases, Tan does not rule out that they will require further assistance from Human Touch. In fact the company still relies on Human Touch to facilitate communication with the Indian government up to the present.

For now, Tan is satisfied with their representative office's performance. He shared, "The branch is doing great, and we can see positive returns from our collaboration with our distributors there."

As for future plans, UIA aims to venture into other fast-growing markets such as Vietnam and to expand the role of their India office to explore the areas around the Indian sub-continent including Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Middle East.



"Without Human Touch's assistance, we would still be struggling with red tape. It will take us a longer time to stabilise. With Human Touch helping us deal with all the government agencies, we can focus our resources and energy on developing the market with our distributor."

Jacky Tan, Engineering Director for UIA

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FEATURED IADVISOR



Name: M. Balakrishnan
Company: Human Touch
Expertise: Market Access
Market: India

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