

SCI spreading wings to all the major continents

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JUST when it was down for the count, Supreme Component International (SCI) caught its second wind in the shape of Vick Aggarwala. The electronic components distributor was on the verge of collapse in 2005 with revenue at just US\$300,000. It had been going through tough times since it was started in 2001.

Today, the company is a recipient of awards that include Enterprise 50 last year. And Mr Aggarwala was conferred the 2011 Leading Indian Entrepreneur Award by the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI).

Since he took the helm, the company has notched strong growth and in the last three years, sales increased by more than 300 per cent. Last year, return on equity came to 42 per cent.

Before he took over SCI, Mr Aggarwala had worked at several leading electronic components distributors. "During this period, I have witnessed the growth of Asia. There was so much activity going on," he recalls.

Despite doing well, he hungered for more. "I like different challenges and would like to have and lead my own business," he explains.

So in 2005, when SCI was offered to him, Mr Aggarwala took it without hesitation. Singapore was his first choice due to its proximity to major manufacturers and clients in Asia. In addition, as a free port, Singapore's open door policies have made it an ideal location for the distribution business in Asia. SCI was therefore a perfect opportunity for Mr Aggarwala.

He has a vision for SCI – to be a global franchised distributor that is in all the major continents. The company is on its way to achieving this, with a wide range of products, such as semiconductors, electronics parts, and LED lighting components. Moreover, the company has also grown to provide customers with more than just components – it also provides solutions. SCI's technical people are always ready to provide free engineering and technical support for Design-in activities to its customers.

In fact, Mr Aggarwala believes in the power of networking, creativity and efficiency. "We have always done our utmost to provide exemplary service to all customers through superior product marketing, field application engineering and professional sales," he says.

To align the company's direction with this belief, he formulated the company's philosophy using its acronym – SCI, for speed, customer focus and being international. But to Mr Aggarwala, providing quality service is also essential; so "Q" got a place in the company's philosophy. Hence, SCIQ was born.

To put these ideals into practice, Mr Aggarwala believes in good internal management. "For a small enterprise as SCI, it is important to create value out of every single person in the company," he says. Human resource is therefore a major contributor to the success of SCI.

Beginning with only two employees, SCI has now expanded its team to 18. "SCI is like a United Nations," quips Mr Aggarwala. "We have employees from Singapore, India, Korea, Indonesia, the Philippines, China and Japan, among others. The SCI team is capable of speaking eleven different languages."

The strong language skill has allowed SCI to reach out to different customers effectively. This strategy has



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been especially crucial for markets such as Japan which are more difficult to penetrate.

"Culturally-sensitive sales managers are essential. We put managers in charge of the different sales region according to the languages they can speak or where they come from," says Mr Aggarwala.

"With this organisational structure, individual sales managers are given specific responsibilities and each staff member is given individual sales targets to meet. These targets are designed according to the staff's experience and seniority, as well as the market size. The targets set are therefore realisable and this gives the staff a better sense of ownership of their jobs."

To further strengthen the company's branding and market presence, SCI has been actively participating in exhibitions and seminars all over the world. This includes Electronica, the largest component show in Munich, Germany. The company has also conducted its own seminars to build brand awareness, gain access in potential markets and develop relations with other suppliers. It maintains membership in relevant industry associations as part of its efforts to expand its business network.

SCI is also continually exploring new opportunities. In 2007, SCI set up a new division – SCI LED – to capitalise on the growing demand for LED products. "LED is the answer to future lighting," explains Mr Aggarwala.

He believes that by being physically present, SCI can deliver better service to its customers around the world. Currently, SCI has an expansion strategy to break into the burgeoning markets, such as China and India in the next two to three years. Having set up a regional office in Hong Kong in 2007, Mr Aggarwala is keen to use it as a springboard to access the China market, starting from Shenzhen. The establishment of another office in Bangalore, India, will come to fruition in later this year.

"We want to be in all the major continents, close to our customers," declares Mr Aggarwala. SCI is thus mapping out its network, driven by the desire to succeed and stay ahead.

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The writers are students of NUS Business School

