

Making Branding easy

→ With competition comes the need for customisation. With retailing growing the way it is in India it comes as little surprise that there is now enterprises that offer a 360-degree interface to branding and merchandising requirements and even facilitate the setting up of dedicated merchandise shops within a company's premises.

We are talking of Chennai-based eYantra Industries, which is today a leading corporate merchandise provider with offices in Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Bangalore and Hyderabad. eYantra essentially provides image communication products and services that act as brand visual material. The forte of the company lies in not just providing merchandising solutions through an online medium, but also through physical stores that it sets up in the premises of client companies.

The launch of the company took place after founder Phani N Raj recognised a need for the same in 2001.

Ranjith Boyanapalli, Head, eTail, eYantra says, "Raj was working with Pricewaterhousecoopers Chicago as a strategic consultant. It was there that he realised that the brand merchandising industry was huge in USA, but was not even in its infancy in India. He saw a great opportunity as the market was untapped and largely unorganised. He returned to India and launched this venture in 2001."

AT A TIME WHEN BELOW-THE-LINE ADVERTISING IS INCREASINGLY BEING LOOKED UPON AS MAINSTREAM PROMOTION, INNOVATIVE FORMS OF MARKETING COMMUNICATION MAY HAVE A LOT GOING FOR THEM. **ZAINAB MORBIWALA** CHECKS OUT CHENNAI-BASED EYANTRA INDUSTRIES, A COMPANY OFFERING SUCH COMMUNICATION SOLUTIONS.

"The name eYantra was invented as a marriage of two components: e for energy and Yantra for machine. The energy of our passion fuels this machine and it performs!"

During the course of six years of its existence, the company has catered to more than 1,000 clients. Claims Boyanapalli, "eYantra has grown at a staggering rate of 73.3 per cent YoY to emerge as a domain-specific merchandise solution provider by accruing exhaustive domain knowledge, proprietary technology and merchandising experience."

Before eYantra entered the fray, the merchandising business market was – and continues to be, by and large – a fairly unorganised set-up with small players catering to corporates when it came to merchandising and gifting solutions. "But owing to their small size and limited resources each vendor had possibly a grip on only 2-3 product categories. Quality was another issue as well. Hence when eYantra was launched some part of the gap in the market was definitely addressed. The company has so far worked on a portfolio of 5,000 products across 150 categories," says Boyanapalli.

In addition to addressing merchandising requirements, eYantra has evolved its services to offer technology-driven solutions such as: Confix, LoyaltyX, RewardX, RetailX and BrandX. These solutions are designed to provide brand merchandising solutions to corporates through offline and

online media. "We are servicing 18 companies through our online brand stores, and eight through our physical brand stores," says Boyanapalli.

Talking about the sales being generated through their online stores and physical stores, he says, "eYantra's online brand store solution "Confix" is a very young addition to the business model; currently we have managed to generate annual revenues of Rs.6 crore from the 18 online stores that we have. Through our eight retail stores we have an annual revenue of a crore of rupees."

Explaining the philosophy behind these retail stores, he says, "Today each employee likes to associate himself with the company he works at; wearing a company t-shirt or using a company bag or having other company-branded utility adds on to his identity and thus these stores that we have, run very well."

Clients eYantra serves through its physical stores include companies such as Genpact, ISB, and TCS among others. Through the online medium it services HCL Technologies, Genpact, ICICI OneSource, Dr. Reddy's Labs, and ING Vyasa.

The most valuable revenue generation category for eYantra is apparel, closely followed by bags and utilities. Talking about expected revenue generation from each of their verticals, Boyanapalli says, "Looking at the present rate of growth, we hope to reach a turnover of Rs.25 crore during this fiscal. As for the contribution from our different business verticals, we hope that cTail, eTail and retail will contribute on an average 50 per cent, 35 per cent and 15 per cent respectively."

Sharing information on the working of the physical stores, Boyanapalli explains, "Our retail store is just like any other retail store, except for the fact that it is located inside a client's facility and sells only company-branded merchandise. It can have any mix of products as per the client's requirement. The company provides space for the retail unit, which is then designed and furnished by eYantra at a very nominal cost. All the stocks and manpower are provided by eYantra."

eYantra

Ranjith Boyanapalli, Head, eTail, eYantra



VERTICALS

- **Retail:** The retail division provides a physical store solution within the premises of a corporate campus. The store offers a wide range of corporate branded merchandise that is available to employees.
- **cTail:** cTail caters to all leading corporate houses of India by providing corporate merchandise solutions for occasion and event-based requirements.
- **eTail:** This division provides clients with internet-based, domain-specific online merchandise solutions. It develops exclusive online brand stores for clients, which facilitates employee and corporate purchase of corporate merchandise.

SOLUTIONS

- **Confix:** The Online Brand Store Solution: a technology-driven online brand store solution that enables companies to offer their employees across geographies, a host of products and services comprising company-branded merchandise. International logistics providers are roped in to offer cost-effective delivery orders from across the globe.
- **RewardX:** A technologically-driven customised solution for rewarding and recognising employees. Aimed at offering corporates a platform to render employee satisfaction.
- **LoyaltyX:** A research-backed and technology-driven loyalty enhancement solution, which increases the perceived value of the incentives for loyalty.
- **BrandX:** Through BrandX, eYantra provides companies the facility of creating products with specialist merchandisers and product designers.



MANAGING THE BACK-END

eYantra has a dedicated supply chain and quality review departments. Currently the company has three warehouses, each of 3,000 sq.ft in area.

Talking about product sourcing, Boyanapalli says, "eYantra has an integrated business process wherein we have our own manufacturing for apparel. Since our product portfolio is vast and it is not practically feasible to manufacture all the products in-house, we have a set of vendors from all over India."

To serve their online brand stores, eYantra has dedicated relationship managers who act as owners of the online stores. Explaining the dynamics of the relationship they share with their clients, Boyanapalli adds, "The relationship managers are constantly in touch with the client for their

merchandising requirements. These relationship managers, apart from servicing them, also offer product consultancy. They suggest product options that truly reflect the brand values of the company."

GOING FORWARD

On the anvil is the launch of a B2C shopping portal, as also the addition of packaging solutions as another business vertical.

On a global scale eYantra faces competition from websites such as www.logo4all.com, www.halo.com and www.branders.com, but it's a different story in India. While eYantra claims it has little competition to contend with in this specialised space in India, the entry of Future Group and Reliance promises to turn up the heat in no uncertain terms in the near future. ❏