

Gaining altitude

Wings provides accounting software to customers in various verticals



Ajay and Kamlesh Gandhi: flying high

The Kochi-headquartered Popular Vehicles & Services is 'happy and satisfied' with Wings ERP as a software and support, says Rajesh Bhaskaran, head IT in the corporate office of one of the biggest car dealerships for Maruti. Popular, which is also one of the biggest customers of Wings Infonet, came on board to implement the Wings ERP suite in late 2016 and has, since, totted up its advantages – particularly integrated accounts and finance. "The data flows directly from the source of sales or service helping avoid re-entry, errors and fudging," Bhaskaran explains, adding: "We recommend Wings to any business."

Wings, a software products company set up in 1992 to develop solutions for businesses worldwide, began with Wings Accounting, the first accounting software in India. In the nearly three decades since then, the Hyderabad-based company has evolved into a suite of several world-class business software products. Its suite now includes packages to automate payrolls,

assets, retail, and businesses in automobile dealer management as wellfoods and beverages.

Its products, covering this broad spectrum of business functions, have the flexibility to be adapted to any environment and work in every world language. Its pioneering accounting software product is meanwhile in its 21st version as *Wings Books 21D* – having been sold to over 50,000 businesses of all sizes, as well as professionals in over 25 countries worldwide, serviced by a team of 200-plus spread across various functions and cities like Bengaluru, Mumbai, Chennai, Delhi and Kolkata – besides, of course, its Hyderabad headquarters. Over the years, it has also received several awards.

Looking back over these years, co-founder and managing director Ajay Gandhi, now 64, says he feels that remaining a product company and building a strong brand was the best decision he and his brother, chairman Kamlesh Gandhi, 59, made. While both are also partners in the chartered

accountants' firm Gandhi & Gandhi, Kamlesh drives technology and has been the chief architect of Wings' software products.

"Most product companies become service companies, when they are unable to manage their finances or business," Ajay points out. "We have largely remained a products company".

Customised products

While Wings was the first mover in accounting software in India, later entrants like Tally became the big names. The Gandhis, however, have no regrets that their company did not grow to that level. Of course, Ajay admits, there is always a hope that one grows like competitors. On the other hand, he points out that Tally was 'always a different ball game'. "They wiped out the entire accounting software business with deep pockets, brilliant strategies and sheer muscle power. As I recall, when they came onto the horizon, I had a list of 400 companies into accounting software. All, except

a small bunch, have vanished. Including TCS, which had Ex," he recalls, adding: "It is to our credit that we and a handful of others have survived all these years, despite Tally."

Sticking to customised products rather than a 'one size fits all' business has been a big plus factor for the Hyderabad entity. This deliberate choosing of a niche area may have held it back from topline growth, but helped Wings to establish itself in the spaces it picked for itself. "Customised products still remain products for vertical businesses," explains Kamlesh. "We are able to cater to specific, but large, business segments with specialised solutions."

Its wide range of customers includes a global religious ministry, Jesus Calls, founded by the late D.G.S. Dhinakaran and Paul Dhinakaran, to which Wings sold an ERP package. Its other clients, however, are more temporal.

A prime example is the attitude of its customers. Nilesch Gupta, managing director, Vijay Sales, a white goods retail major & one of their longest-standing customers, finds the relationship still going strong, after a partnership of nearly 15 years. "This is nothing short of a miracle in today's times, where ties break for any flimsy

Arena finds Wings affordable, reachable and workable



reason,” he says. “I think that, primarily, the reason for such bonding is that we understand each other and respect each other’s domain knowledge – and, on top of it, we trust each other a lot.”

Since 2005, Gupta says, Wings has come to him time and again on its own and upgraded it to a different platform to cater to the customer’s need to manage its growth. “Their intent was not to make more money out of these transitions, but to ensure we are future-proof and future-ready,” he points out, adding: “This one trait, plus being available on all our working days – specifically, even on weekends – is a great reason for our partnership. Overall, we now consider them to be our integral part and not a third-party vendor.”

Goan mall major CMM Arena, which retails products like home furniture, home appliance, office furniture, modular kitchen and home décor from mega-stores in Panaji, Mapusa, Margao, Vasco and Ponda, was looking for a single solution to handle both its front-end and back-end businesses. Says Hari Kaul, general manager, retail, CMM Arena: “During our evaluation process and subsequent demo we found that Wings has all the features, which we were looking for within our budget.” Having started using it in April 2017, the chain can see effective utilisation of its resources across the channels and generate reports

in time to fix any operational problems.

Describing Wings ERP as an “affordable, reachable and workable solution for various categories of retail, particularly electronics and appliances”, Kaul says it has implemented solutions in inventory management, billing, ordering, CRM, and a bridge with Arena’s online presence. “In addition to all that, the finance and BI tool is interesting for planning of resources at the back end,” he adds.

Popular likes Wings

Rajesh Bhaskaran of Popular says the company decided to have an integrated application covering all processes and functions to consolidate the financials of all companies of its 75-year-old parent Kuttukaran group, which has leading automobile dealerships for global brands through Kerala and in other parts of India as well. OEM dealers for Maruti have to use the DMS (dealer management system) provided by the manufacturer, as it is the source of all operational data – be it sales or service. Over a period of time, however, Popular has found many things missing in the DMS, as well as restrictions of use that were bottlenecks to improve its own operational efficiency.

Wings ERP was finalised after the evaluation of many applications that were offered, starting with major

modules, which are part of the suite like Car Sales, Car Service, Used Car, Finance, CRM, HRMS, Payroll and Fixed Assets. “Ours being an old company, change management was a huge challenge; but we were able to manage it satisfactorily,” he says. “From a business perspective, we have deployed the application across all locations and are capturing the process data centrally.”

The second phase of implementation will start for activities like fine-tuning the process flows, building more controls as required, integrating with banks, process automation, and advanced analytics and dashboards. Popular also plans to build new process modules for procurement, business annual plans and projects.

This has been a new and challenging project for Wings too, in terms of the scale of operations, complexities, controls and user management, Kamlesh says. “There is continuous evolving of the application to manage data, users and performance. We faced many challenging times, but came out with extra dedicated efforts to ensure that all the areas are covered.” Adds Bhaskaran: “I am sure, in due course, we can make the application a strong base to manage the business efficiently and scale up for any changes as required.”♦

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