

Phones and meters help JNTU alumnus go global

A. Krishna Prasad, the founder of Linkwell Telesystems, like all bright young men of his time, studied engineering (electronics and communications) at JNTU. He joined a public sector firm soon after as was the norm those days. Learning the ropes from the two places, he was employed prior to his becoming self-employed, he put into practice what he learnt at college remarkably well. An unfavourable partnership with friends saw him get the minor share of about Rs 80 lakh, in a firm they put up together. Two relationships fell in place for Mr Prasad from then on, both life commitments. One was marriage to Ms Radha Rani and the other with Linkwell Telesystems.

"The telecom revolution



was taking place and the first steps were taken around 1987 to market the latest push button telephones. They progressed to key telephones and later introduced EPBAX for which they tied up with the market leader. The next fancy item to come on the block was the pay phone," recalled Mr Prasad.

Linkwell was until then in the marketing and service space; it started manufacturing the ubiquitous Public Call office billing monitors. "In the service



Linkwell Telesystems founder A. Krishna Prasad

industry, we had learnt lessons on customer relations and this helped us deal with the clientele efficiently. Manufacturing, however, was a different ball game so we employed over a period of time professionals drawn from

premier institutes to conduct research and development which is still new for Indian manufacturing organisations. The product was unique to India and sold well," he explained.

As the market evolved

so too did the company. "In a matter of three years, our company rose to the number one position owed mainly to excellent marketing skills and tactical customer associations."

Since the company is in the B2B category, Mr Prasad said that their rapport with dealers helped them to capture the market. "From 2001, the wireless PCOs came into the picture in rural telephony. Here we did very well leading them to successfully export pay phones to countries in Africa, the CIS countries and the Middle East."

Many new products introduced at Linkwell include vehicle tracking systems, transaction terminals, fixed wireless phones, GSM modems and data converters, ODM and OEM services. Diversification brought in a good

run from 1998 to 2007 following which the company consolidated its market share by adding other items such as energy meters, ticket vending solutions and software products like EVD (Electronic Voucher Distribution) and AMR (Automatic Meter Reading).

The company has also associated with 10 state governments by supplying electronic energy meters for power distribution companies.

Commendable about Linkwell is their metamorphoses, from a marketing small time firm to a manufacturing giant with competition from all over the world; The husband and wife duo has showed the world that if priorities are set right all else will fall in place.

(In association with jobsdialog.com of TMI e2E Academy)