Technology Scripts A Bakery's Success

Here's the remarkable story of a door-to-door milk vendor who had the vision to invest in technology to power his bakery business, which today comprises a chain of 25 outlets!

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R Ponnusamy, founder and managing director of Aroma Bakery, has worked hard to make his business grow. He began his journey as a door-to-door milk seller and set up his first bakery in 1972, calling it Mahalakshmi Bakery. By 1974, he'd expanded to one more outlet called Aroma Bakery. Currently, the Aroma chain has a

presence at 25 different locations in Coimbatore, the second largest city of Tamil Nadu.

But Ponnusamy's hard work alone would not have been sufficient to make Aroma Bakery such a success. As he himself acknowledges, it is because of technology that his business has grown to its current level. "Right from production planning and billing issues to dealing with manpower problems, I have made full use of technology; which in turn has benefited my business," says Ponnusamy.

Technology – to maintain product quality

The success of a bakery depends on the freshness and quality of its products. Guided by this principle, Ponnusamy decided to make use of technology to deliver high quality products. "10 years back, we started investing in various equipment for

R Ponnusamy, founder and MD, Aroma Bakery

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production purposes along with other software and hardware tools to maintain quality," says Ponnusamy. The bakery imported specialised

machinery for manufacturing and used different software to keep a check on raw materials and to control wastage.

Meeting operational challenges with IT

Over the last decade, Aroma Bakery has been implementing different technologies for the smooth functioning of its business. From manufacturing to operations, a majority of its tasks are done through the use of IT. To enhance productivity, it has placed CCTVs in its production units to keep a strict vigil on workers. "The use of CCTVs ...has increased the performance of employees. Workers are now putting in 100 per cent of their efforts as they know that they are under surveillance and their work is being monitored," quips Ponnusamy. Besides, the company has been using Tally for accounting purposes and payroll software to aid administrative work. With the use of

Company employees working on the technology installed at an Aroma Bakery facility

diverse technologies, Aroma Bakery has grown significantly and has managed to increase the number of its outlets.

Always with expansions, come business challenges. As the firm expands, it becomes more important for it to take care of issues like customer satisfaction, retention, curbing fraudulent practices and on-time delivery. To address such challenges, the company mulled over the available solutions, analysed their pros and cons keeping in mind its own requirements and finally decided to use GoFrugal's RayMedi RPOS 6—a retail point-of-sale solution. After just eight months, Aroma Bakery has expressed its satisfaction with the functioning of RPOS 6 and the benefits it has derived. "We opted for RayMedi RPOS 6 because its production planning was in line with our expansion plans. Earlier, we were under the impression that SAP was the only solution available, but when we explored further, we found RayMedi RPOS 6 offering the same facilities at an affordable cost," states Ponnusamy.

Earlier Aroma Bakery was using software provided by a Coimbatore-based software company but it did not find the solution adequate as the software provider never updated the solution in tune with the bakery's changing requirements. "Now, we are getting the services based on our requirements. The best thing is that GoFrugal provides a customised solution for our demands and has satisfied us," says Ponnusamy. The software has been installed in three systems of the bakery.

Kumar Vembu, founder and CEO of GoFrugal Technologies (www.

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gofrugal.com) says, "The challenges in the hospitality industry are to deliver high quality products and a consistent service experience to guests. Technology helps on both fronts, by enabling the store staff to focus on the guest and not on the operational details. Technology can also deliver higher value additions in terms of achieving operational efficiency, effective delivery management, cost effective and targeted promotions on specials, among other benefits. To summarise, technology can help measure the key performance indicators [KPIs] applicable for the business in a simple, cost effective and consistent manner and help firms improve on the same in a planned manner. This results in expansion and growth for the business."

Experiencing good ROI

Ponnusamy finds that the deployment of RPOS 6 has been fruitful for his business. As per his calculations, he finds that he has experienced a good return– both tangible and intangible. "RPOS implementation has benefited the bakery in many ways—from inventory management to better waste management," says Ponnusamy. Earlier the bakery had to rely on manpower to calculate the stock available, perform billing tasks and other similar functions. But after adopting the retail solution, it is easy to get these operations done which, in turn, saves a lot of time.

Moreover, with its implementation, the bakery now does not need to hire too many employees to perform the various chores; thereby lowering its operational costs. Besides, Ponnusamy finds it easy to get accurate information prior to taking important decisions. "Improved customer service and satisfaction are other key benefits the RPOS has delivered," says Ponnusamy.

Looking ahead

The bakery has been expanding its business slowly and steadily. Having ridden on technology to thrive in this competitive business environment, the company is looking forward to automate all its outlets with centralised control. Moreover, the bakery is planning to adopt mobile technology for its upcoming Aroma Milk Project.

With constant hard work and effectively implemented technology solutions, the bakery has attained an enviable position in the market. ■