

A DESIGNER STORE

Dons Technology For Growth



Tamanna, a Bangalore-based designer store, adopts technology to manage and boost its business. Inventory control, finance & accounts management, MIS, security and branding are some of the benefits that came out of IT implementation.

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BenefIT Bureau

Bangalore-based Tamanna is an exclusive designer wear store started by Dhanya and Lokesh Pandya in 1997. The duo began modestly with a small wholesale garment store in a lane off Commercial Street in 1993. After the up-market retail outlet, Tamanna, was set up, it has grown into a one-stop fashion store for men and women. Today, the firm has spread its wings overseas to USA, Canada, the Middle East and the United Kingdom with a yearly turnover of Rs 5

crore. However, the company's growth would not have been so spectacular if it weren't for its timely IT adoption.

Says Hari Shankar Bhatt, business manager, Tamanna, "...We began growing and with growth came the difficulties of managing the business. We needed timely information to ensure that the calculations, estimates and future decisions did not go wrong. Thus, we selected technology to achieve inventory control, finance and accounts management, and MIS, which was crucial for our growth."

Finding the perfect technology

The first technology adopted by Tamanna was DOS-based basic billing software called Shopper, in 2001. "We used Shopper for 2-3 years to manage our billing. However, as we expanded, inventory control became crucial, forcing us to look for other alternatives," says Bhatt. Thereafter, Tamanna experimented with two billing and inventory management software. Alongside, the firm used Tally for its basic accounting needs. Yet, the technology solutions couldn't keep up with the pace of growth.

"We needed a single software to manage both inventory control and the finance and accounting function. Another issue was the need for good service. In our experience with technology vendors in the past, we enjoyed good service in the first year; however, service declined in subsequent years. We wanted a vendor who would act immediately if we stumbled upon problems, since if issues aren't treated immediately, they can grow in magnitude causing significant losses," says Bhatt.

Finally, in 2009, the company found the technology to fit its business. It adopted a complete retail software solution from GoFrugal

"With an ERP system in place, we have saved a lot because of improved efficiencies, better management, and lower manpower costs."

Hari Shankar Bhatt, business manager, Tamanna

Technologies for its two retail outlets and warehouse. The solution included RayMedi HQ (a Web-based software to manage the store chain), RayMedi RPOS (for trading, inventory management, accounts and business intelligence) and RayMedi NetTrade (enabling secure electronic trade and data interchange among trade partners, customers and peer groups).

"The company needed a complete solution that would match its growth aspirations. Our solution complements Tamanna's growth vision and will allow it to expand the reach of its business and dream big as it grows the business," says Kumar Vembu, CEO, GoFrugal Technologies (www.gofrugal.com)

A retail solution to complement growth

The retail solution has been a magic wand for Tamanna Exports. It has helped the company improve the efficiency of day-to-day operations, provide timely information, reduce manpower, etc, steering it ahead on the growth track.

Cost savings: The total cost savings due to the deployment of the retail solution is expected to be around Rs 10-12 lakhs a year. "We have saved a lot because of supervision, improved efficiencies, better management, and lower manpower costs since additional manpower wasn't required. The whole cycle beginning with processing an

order to the supplier, is now faster and more accurate. Further, the billing is very quick, resulting in customers being happier because of the lower check-out time. In our business, time is money and thus, the cost savings arising out of faster and better management, is immense. Our investments in RayMedi solutions paid off within six months," says Hari.

Better inventory management: The retail solution has helped Tamanna achieve inventory control. Image mapping has been instrumental in this. "We deal with designer garments and usually make only one piece in one style, design and colour combination. Each garment is exclusive. Customers might want time to decide on buying. Most often, when they return to purchase the outfit of their choice, the outfit is sold. It used to be very difficult for them to describe the outfit and for us to recollect which one they referred to. With image mapping, each outfit is attached to a barcode, making it very easy to identify an outfit. This smoothenes the process of placing a re-order. It also gives us the flexibility to inform the supplier about specific demands the customer made, like a change in colour combination, etc. This has helped us in taking orders in XL sizes. Overall, this is a huge boost to managing inventory and tracking each and every outfit," says Bhatt.

Improved efficiency: Further, the retail solution has drastically improved operational efficiency. It has ensured the availability of realtime information. "Through NetTrade, I get an hourly update and back-up at my head office and also at the branches. Further, the order taking is instantly available on the system, helping us to plan delivery better and reduce operating costs," says Bhatt. Besides, the daybook (available in the software) that accounts for even

petty expenses, has helped Tamanna monitor every penny spent.

Adding intelligence through reports: The retail solution also offers detailed and smart reports helping Tamanna take quick and timely decisions. "I currently use only 10 per cent of the reports. The most important reports for us relate to sales analysis and counter sales, which need to be available to take timely decisions. Earlier, this used to be a painstaking process and often, by the time the data was available, it was too late. But through the extensive, smart and detailed reports offered by the software, we have been able to take quick decisions," says Bhatt.

Better time and manpower management: The timely availability of information from the time of receipt to the time of dispatch, has helped Tamanna save 70 per cent of the time taken at the warehouse level. Further, the firm has been able to save on labour costs. "When we decided to expand, we estimated for additional manpower. However, the retail solution did wonders. The level of automation achieved, removed the need for any additional labour for our new store," says Bhatt.



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Building a tech network

Apart from the retail software solution, Tamanna has used technology for security and brand promotion. It has four closed circuit cameras (CCTVs) at the two showrooms. It also uses digital media extensively for branding. The website, bulk SMSs, radio advertisements and audio-visuals at movie theatres are some other media adopted by Tamanna.

"We use software called SMS Control by Control M Technologies

to send bulk SMSs to our customers. With our retail solution, the customer data is transferred and then the SMS is sent about offers, new stocks, etc. We conduct such activities on a quarterly basis, especially when new stocks come in," says Bhatt.

A peep into the future

Today, Tamanna spends about Rs 4.5 lakhs on technology. Looking ahead, Tamanna plans to use it to increase its presence globally. "We plan to start an online store once the local retail season slows down. We also plan to update our website and go in for customer loyalty cards. Soon, we will opt for a security control system with RFID and barcode readers for theft control," says Bhatt. The firm also plans to use technology to overcome any challenges to growth. "Staff management is a challenge today. We want a solution to set benchmarks for increments and bonuses -- helping us monitor or grade employee performance. We plan to continue to adopt technology to overcome business challenges," says Bhatt. Thus, technology will play a crucial role in the growth of this designer wear store. ■

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