



Kailash Sheth

Forging the Way Through

An undisputed leader in providing Integrated Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Solutions, Germguard Technologies (M) Sdn. Bhd headed by Kailash Sheth is seeking new heights in a niche market, while betting on Malaysia's economic growth.

▪ B. Vijay

Mr. Kailash, you're into providing Integrated Air Quality (IAQ) Solutions. What is this business all about?

This is a very unique business which I ventured into as one of the first in Malaysia. In Malaysia the level of awareness regarding the importance of maintaining healthy Indoor Air Quality is rather low. But still Germguard plays a lead role in educating our potential customers on the importance of IAQ and we have made a breakthrough. We do inspections and carry out a complete audit of the premise onsite to identify the quality of air within.

Why maintaining indoor air-quality is very important?

Since most of the buildings are air-conditioned today, it brings along with it a host of potential health hazards. The air which is confined in the building is continuously circulated by the air-conditioning system. If there are no proper air maintenance safeguards in place, eventually high-levels of chemical and biological contaminants pollute the air causing health hazards to the occupants.

Social Entrepreneurs Network (SeNet) an organisation committed to the development of Indian entrepreneurs in the country has been awarding excellence awards to young entrepreneurs, encouraging them to excel further in business.



With the assistance of SeNet, Malaysian Indian Business, tracks down some of the SeNet award winners in the past and finds out how these successful entrepreneurs have fared since their award winning days.

In this article, Malaysian Indian Business speaks to Kailash Sheth, winner of SeNet's Young Indian Entrepreneur award for the year 2009.



When the indoor air pollution levels get critical there is a great likelihood that the occupants begin complaining of a multitude of health complications. Usually fungal, bacterial and viral contaminations are most prevalent causing among others, allergic reactions.

So what is the importance of good air quality to people?

Surprisingly, most people who work in such buildings do suffer various health related problems and suffer in silence without realising the source of the problems. Employers start showing concern when level of productivity of employees take a dip. Employing an Indoor Air Quality specialist to make an assessment of the quality of the air the occupants breathe every day may help to keep many illnesses at bay, and will help to improve work performance of the employees.

So how do you address this air quality control when a client calls you in?

Firstly, we do a health check of the building, an audit of the quality of the air within the building. For example, when you go to a hospital you will see people coming in with all kinds of illness. You can even notice the

medical staff wearing masks. Now what does that signify?

There is fear of contamination around. Now when we enter the building we quickly look at three important factors. Firstly, we study the air-conditioning system because we believe that almost 60% of the problems arise from here. Secondly, we look at the ceiling above because contaminated air passes through here, and is distributed to the various sections of the building. And thirdly, the occupied space where people work daily. When a problem is identified the building management or owner is accordingly notified, and thereafter a solution is provided.

So from your experience where is this problem commonly found?

Though Indoor Air Quality is a great concern in most of the buildings, focus is usually in a place like hospitals and commercial buildings, where there is a constant flow of people giving rise to lots of cross-contaminations.

So have you done anything in this respect of educating the people?

Yes definitely. Since we started our business in 2002 we have worked tirelessly speaking to various

organisations, building owners, businesses and creating a very profound impact on them on the merits of having good indoor air quality in their workplace. Having high regards for our professionalism and work delivery system and the high levels of success from our work, we now have many outstanding clients who never hesitate to recommend our services to their peers.

So there is a lack of efforts by the authorities on this issue?

Right now it is under the jurisdiction of the Human Resources Ministry. Though the government has shown some concern on the issue, a lot needs to be done to create awareness especially among employers to provide a clean working environment for the employees.

Is the Health Ministry or the Environment Ministry involved in this matter?

No! In 2005 the Human Resources Ministry came out with a basic code of practice which is very basic and does not cover many angles. A general level of good indoor air quality is lacking. There are two types of clients, where one adopts a 'don't care' attitude that he is still

alive and another with a proactive posture particularly within the medical fraternity that wants to ensure this problem doesn't exist within their premises.

When did you start this business?

This was in 2002 when I returned home after my graduation in Australia. My passion was to have my own business, and with the support of my family members, especially my parents, I took a decision to explore the business world on this indoor air quality knowing very well it would be an uphill task for me in the beginning. I picked up this Indoor Air Quality Services idea and went on to learn the art and science of the business. I have since ensured utmost professional satisfaction to my customers who have constantly awarded me repeated job orders.

How long have you been doing this and how you have fared so far?

I had to take extreme pains in keeping my costs in check. Initially, I started off with a small operation waiting anxiously for a much needed breakthrough. Only after about 18 months did I get my first major break. I had to engage many part time hands initially until other business organisations started coming in. Realising the immense potential in my services, I then started to engage full-time staff.

Where do you stand now as a company?

We are a leader in this very niche market where the scope for growth is huge. We stand substantially well in terms of goodwill and in the name we have created for the company. With an excellent track record, many industries today look forward to seeking our advice and services to help their air quality problems, be it government or private hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, hotels, oil & gas sectors and many others.

So what would your goals be?

Our immediate focus is establishing branch offices in all the major cities of Malaysia, including Johor Baru,



Penang, Kuantan, Kuching and Kota Kinabalu. Next, we plan to move our business into neighbouring countries like Brunei, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines and India. Our first international foray will be in Brunei by the first quarter of 2011. God willing we may be in a position to do a public listing of the company at the local bourse in a few years time with an adequate turnover and of course meeting the other requirements, too.

And what would that turnover amount be?

We plan to achieve a total turnover of at least RM25-RM30 million in the near future with a steady growth in profits over the years. To help us achieve this long term objective we at Germguard, are working on an untarnished company profile.

Would it be possible to name some of your major clients?

Due to the sensitivities involved, I am not at liberty to mention the names of any of my esteemed clients at this stage. One major client was a hospital where a public controversy emerged when the hospital was closed down because of fungus within its premises. We were engaged to do the clean up operations. We did that and so far it has been good. That project was a major breakthrough for us.

Would you be able to tell us the future potential of your market share?

It is huge because every building you see is our target client. However to quantify that in monetary term would be difficult as each client have their own unique problem with a unique solution. I can only say that there is a huge potential.

As a company what is the edge you offer to your clients?

What we have is an Integrated Solution, a comprehensive package that relates to air quality. We have the know-how, the latest ultramodern equipments, state-of-the-art technology, well qualified staff, and more importantly years of experience behind us. We have also qualified under the ISO rules. So we have built on these strengths to serve our clients well in a very niche market.

So how do you improvise on the technology need for this work?

Our technology, the equipments and know-how come particularly from the United States where Indoor Air Quality related services have progressed very well over the years. So I make it point to visit the United States regularly to keep myself abreast with the latest developments in this field.

Where do you get your inspiration to succeed or do you have a role model?

The inspiration comes in trying to maintain the leadership role in this field, while serving my country and the people with passion in helping them to maintain good health by providing the latest technology for good Indoor Air Quality controls. The many great business leaders who have proven themselves with so much humility are my role models.

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