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# HOTELIER INDONESIA

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# IDS Softwares on their 25th year in business

**Hotelier Indonesia would like to congratulate IDS Softwares on their 25th year in business. We're privileged to be joined by Vissal Mathew, Founder & Joint Managing Director of IDS to discuss their path to this momentous occasion.**

**Congratulations on 25 years, it's quite an achievement. As a starter, what is the IDS footprint in the global hospitality market?**

Our global footprint can be looked upon in two ways. One, in terms of our presence in 40 countries. These include South Asia, Asia Pacific, Middle East, Africa and of course India.

Secondly, our footprint in the global hospitality market can be looked at in terms of our large bouquet of products. We are probably the only company with a solution for every market segment, from luxury and starred hotels, to boutique hotels, serviced apartments, resorts, standalone properties, limited service apartments, restaurants, lounge bars and clubs.

While many software providers may simply downsize their software and offer it to a particular segment, this is not how IDS NEXT does it. We have built our solutions from the ground up for each market segment, keeping in mind their niche needs. We spend months understanding the operations of a luxury hotel, a chain, serviced apartments, and design solutions to automate their specific processes.

Our extensive bouquet of offerings, enterprise wide ERP solution and the comprehensive set of modules the application covers, from Front Office to Accounts Receivables, HR, to PoS, Inventory and Maintenance, besides others, have enabled us to go places.

What has also helped IDS NEXT grow rapidly is our ability to partner with other hospitality technology vendors to offer third party products. These interface with our Hotel ERP and widen its scope to provide users a more comprehensive solution.

**Where and how did IDS get their start in August 1987?**

Our first client was Taj Residency in Bangalore. They were exploring the benefits of computerization and wanted to know if it would work for them. One of the most important areas of a hotel is the credit department. Most hotels conduct a lot of business on credit and it is critical for them to bring back this revenue at the earliest. IDS NEXT began by helping Taj Residency computerize their credit department and to their pleasant surprise, they were able to turn around their age-wise outstanding from 180 to 60 days! This encouraged them



■ Vissal Mathew

to computerize other departments and our application went along, growing to offer automation from one department to the next.

Other benefits of computerization experienced by Taj Residency include optimization of their manpower, responding to customer requests faster on accounts related queries and access to reports that helped them monitor revenue and expenditure in the hotel.

### **What were the early years like?**

The early years for IDS NEXT were tough, like they are for most other start-ups who enter the market early. We needed to create a demand for our product and show hoteliers the value of computerization and automation. During the early years, only large chains were willing to make the investment and adopt technology. Then technology was expensive too. However IDS NEXT was able to successfully offer hospitality software to a few prominent independent hotels and this acted as excellent case studies to convince the rest.

In the late 80's and early 90's there were few hospitality technology providers. We had to spend time understand their needs and develop customized solutions for each segment. We invested months in research. As hotel staff began to see that automation was not putting them out of jobs but was actually speeding up their work and making things easier, the barrier of initial resistance dropped and it became easy for IDS NEXT to grow its presence in India, rapidly.

### **What were some of the significant benchmarks that have contributed to the company's growth and longevity?**

- We are where we are today because IDS NEXT has an open minded attitude. We constantly take customer feedback and tweak/ refine our products to the changing needs of the market. Our products are flexible, easy to configure and customizable to our clients' needs - be they geography specific needs, product offering, accounting methodology or taxation requirements, and it is this ability to change to satisfy our customers that has helped us go to 40 countries.
- Every 3-4 years all our products are rebuilt from the ground up to adopt the latest technology. This process makes our products more robust, fast and in keeping with the newest technological advances
- We are also backed by an excellent group of developers who understand how to code well
- We always put our customers first, sometimes even if it seems economically unviable, we never say no. We partner with our clients and believe that their growth is our growth. This is one of the key reasons while 40% of our business is based on referrals and over 30% of our customers have been with us for over 10 years.
- Our software has undergone so many iterations and improvements that it imbues a host of best practices. When a property adopts our solution they don't just invest in a IDS NEXT software but buy into a system with in-built intelligence which gives them a competitive edge.

### **What product and operational enhancements does IDS plan for the coming years to address changes in technology and market needs?**

- In the coming years you will see IDS NEXT offering
- Platform agnostic solutions that lower the TCO for our clients
  - Greater forays into mobility solutions – we have already launched Envy Dine, a restaurant software that is intuitive, has in-built intelligent and offers users a fantastic opportunity to upsell, cross sell and grow revenue

- Foray into virtualization and cloud computing as this is the way technology is heading. We have a cloud based solution ready for launch in the form of a loyalty management tool called Guest Dynamix
- Training – IDS NEXT software is functionally rich, and if hotels are to exploit this to the fullest they need to train staff. We offer training facilities through IDS NEXT Advantage Academy so our users can leverage our software to the maximum and grow their revenue
- Consolidation of technology so that it does not operate in a siloed manner, but talk to each other for enhanced operational efficiency
- Solutions that are able to communicate to a host of third party products, so that our Enterprise wide ERP can widen its scope to suit individual hotel needs

### **How do the IDS systems integrate with social media?**

The presence of social media is growing and hotels across segments are looking for a solution that can incorporate the benefits of social media. Our cloud based Loyalty Management Solution - Guest Dynamix is designed to do just that.

### **How does IDS use social media for its own use?**

Social media offers low investment, high online advantage to any company be it B2B or B2C. IDS NEXT has a large presence on social media be it Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, YouTube or document and picture sharing sites. It gives us great visibility, branding and helps us reach out to both, our clients and newer markets cost effectively.

### **Where do you see IDS in five years, in ten years?**

We are one of the few providers of hospitality ERP. Our solution is the most comprehensive, low on investment and licensing, functions on a single, integrated database that offers drill down visibility into hotel processes. We hope to keep expanding our ERP to offer modules like BI, revenue management, GDS and more. In the next five years we hope to also consolidate our presence in India, Asia Pacific and Middle East, while expanding our presence in the emergent markets of Africa and Central Asia.

We also hope to consolidate our offering as a holistic provider of total technology solutions, which would better help our customers manage their hotels. In the next 5-10 years we also hope to go public.

### **What is IDS vision for the Indonesian market?**

Hospitality is a key industry for Indonesia and one of the problems we see in Indonesia, is the dearth of trained hospitality manpower, we are currently working with hotel management colleges to offer our software so that students can be trained and increase their employability.

We also have partners and a sales and service team in Bali and Jakarta, and will continue to expand this team to sell more software. In the next three years we definitely hope to have a top presence in the country and be considered as a valuable international technology partner for the hospitality industry.

Hotelier Indonesia would like to thank Vissal Mathew for his participation. We join IDS in celebrating their 25th year anniversary.