



PHOTO: SANJOLI GANDHI

Service Excellence, **DELIVERED**

Harish Nim is an entrepreneur in the true sense. From just a four-man IT services start-up to 1,400 strong staff strength, Emerio GlobeSoft is truly a Made in Singapore success story.

By **NITHYA SUBRAMANIAN**

The Porsche Boxter parked outside the multi-storied Emerio GlobeSoft headquarters in the unassuming Ubi Techpark is perhaps the only sign of 'having arrived'. The past year has been particularly fruitful for Harish Nim – his IT services company has managed to tide the recession, besides winning the SICCI Business Entrepreneur of the Year award and made it to the Enterprise 50 list for the second time.

For someone who does not come from a traditional business family – his father was a government servant and mother a housewife – building a S\$60 million company in a span of 12 years is no mean achievement. Nim credits Singapore and its conducive business environment for playing a major role in his success.

A graduate from the Indian Institute of Technology with a Masters in Business Administration from the prestigious Indian Institute of Management, Nim could have carried on climbing the corporate ladder. He started out in Pertech Computers Ltd (PCL), India's second largest personal computer manufacturer and worked in various senior positions there.

"I worked in India for 10 years and when I took stock of myself, I wasn't happy with where I was. I could not even buy a Delhi Development Authority flat. (DDA is akin to Singapore's Housing Development Board). I resigned from my job, sold everything I had and with S\$12,000 in my pocket, I moved to Singapore and joined a three-way partnership firm," he said.

But things did not work well and Nim was forced to take up a regular job with PCL as it wanted to grow its business abroad. Soon the entrepreneurial bug bit this computer professional and this time he was in control. He decided to get into IT services business instead of hardware which was his expertise and found a niche that lay between the big boys such as the IBM, HP, Oracle etc and the smaller local players.

"I realised that there was no second layer and positioned my company there," he said. But Emerio is no middle-rung company. It has established a name by offering quality service at competitive rates. "Our costs are much lower than the larger corporations." For instance, the company decided to move out of the Central Business District (CBD) area to

a tech park in the eastern part of the island. "I bought a 7,500 sq ft space for just S\$1.2 million paying a monthly mortgage of S\$5,000, saving almost \$21,000 in our cash flow. Thus I could be cost competitive," reminisced Nim.

Today the company is planning to stay focused in the South-east Asian region, besides having a presence in India. "I've actually wasted time and effort in the Western countries. Now I will focus on the Asean," said Nim. In fact Emerio has a big presence in Malaysia and Singapore with large office space and several local projects. "The Singapore Government is a big client and I work with the JTC, Singapore Land Authority (SLA) and so on," he elaborated. Now, Emerio is looking at consolidating in Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. China, Nim claims, is a difficult market to break into.

Besides building Emerio into a world class organisation, this entrepreneur's other passion is golf, which he plays at least twice a week and has a handicap of nine points. In fact he has a club and ball prominently placed in his office at Ubi. His wife Seema, who has been his staunch

supporter, is an outdoors person who enjoys cycling, trekking and so on. Nim's two daughters – Aditi and Avanti – are in the process of honing their skills by securing degrees and working with established corporations abroad. "My older daughter is into Bhangra and has studied Economics, Political Science and Mid-Eastern languages, while my younger one wants to pursue law after graduating in management studies," said the doting father.

Nim took up Singapore citizenship 14 years ago, but he still remains connected with India. "Both Seema's and my immediate families are in India, though my mother prefers to spend her time here in Singapore with us."

Despite creating and running a multi-million dollar company, this entrepreneur continues to remain grounded. "We are prepared to move back to an HDB apartment and spend our time drinking kopi at the hawker centre. Even now, we enjoy eating at food courts and the simple things in life," he said.

In order to not seem ostentatious, Nim now plans to keep his Boxter at home and replace it with a more basic set of four wheels. ■

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Harish Nim along with his dedicated staff and (right) Emerio's impressive office in Malaysia.