Thriving on ideas in a new era

IT firm Genovate Solutions believes in finding fresh ways to differentiate key strategies, reports **QUAH CHIN CHIN**

'Be it the product, be it improvement in the process, you've got to have new ways of doing things – that's paramount.'

– J Anton Ravindran

IMAGINE a system "intelligent" enough to track a customer's location, analyse the customer's profile and purchasing habits, and send promotional SMS-es specifically targeted at him or her.

If this sounds like something merchants would be interested in, they would be pleased to know that it will soon be out in the markets. Receivers of junk text-messages might be less pleased, of course.

Home-grown IT company Genovate Solutions, which developed the tool – known as the customer service intelligence (CSI) discovery – will release it "any time now", said chief executive officer and founder J Anton Ravindran.

"The CSI has a certain level of artificial intelligence incorporated into it; it has a knowledge engine, so it infers (where the customer is and his buying behaviour) before sending the message," he explained.

The system integrates technologies such as location-based tracking, data mining, and machine learning to ensure that the promotional campaigns are relevant to potential customers, while preventing spam.

CSI is one of the recent projects by Genovate Solutions, which provides other software and business applications such as ezGEMS, an enterprise resource planning solution designed to help industries manage their capital assets; ezHealth, a Web-based application for healthcare providers, and VLearn, an e-learning platform. The company counts Sony, Hewlett Packard, Singapore Technologies, and the Singapore Exchange among its clients.

Set up in 2000, it has since diversified its portfolio by setting up two subsidiaries – RapidSTART, which provides Oracle and Microsoft-centric solutions, and KnowledgeWindow Asia Pacific (KWAP), a training centre offering IT-related programmes.

"These subsidiaries are very different and distinct from one another," he said. "They're different legal entities, they have different teams all together, (but) they offer products and services within the technology space."

For example, KWAP offers courses such as Diploma in Computing, Advanced Diploma in Computer Studies/Information Technology, Bachelor of Information and Communications Technology, and Masters of E-commerce, from partner universities including University of Sunderland and University of South Australia.

Doing well in technology arena

"Frankly, we did make a determined decision to go after this, because today's education business is more important than ever before," said Mr Ravindran, who also chairs the Internet Industry Association of Singapore. "The most important resource is not financial resources, national resources, but human resources. It is a hugely potent business with an enormous future."

Genovate is also Asia-Pacific's largest authorised training partner in systems applications and products. The company will organise an international conference on computer games and allied technology – which Mr Ravindran said will be the first in Singapore – in April. It will "bring both industry and academia to one place".

"We expect at least 350 to 400 highly qualified academics globally to be present, and at least 100 papers to be published," he said, adding that the organising committee intends to make the conference an annual event. Genovate seems to have cemented its place in the IT domain, if its track record is anything to go by. It was the only software company on the top 20 list of winners of the Enterprise50 award – jointly organised by Accenture and *The Business Times* – in 2006 and 2007.

Last year, the firm's revenue grew by about 35 per cent on-year, said Mr Ravindran, who did not reveal figures. He said that 70 per cent of the total revenue "came from outside of Singapore". Genovate operates in seven other countries, with offices in Sydney, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Colombo and Mumbai, among others.

"This fiscal year, we will open a minimum of four new offices. There are major plans to go into new territories that we've never been into, and that includes Vietnam and China," he said.

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