

Connecting Ideas

India and Germany – A Successful Start to Business Collaborations

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This is my 7th article in the IPR magazine for the "Connecting Ideas" series on various topics related to the Indo-German collaboration. I had started with the Overview of the SME world in context of Indo-German Relations, Future trends for SME businesses in the Indo-German collaboration, Industry 4.0 and its implications on the SME segment companies, the Opportunities in the Water and Wastewater Management for Indo-German companies and the delegation visit from the German Umwelttechnik companies to Maharashtra in January / February 2018.

One question always comes up while arranging and managing these delegation visits – either openly or in a circumspect way: Do these visits from foreign companies actually mean anything from Small and Medium business perspective or are they just some photo opportunities? How do these visits or interactions benefit the SME sector businesses who are engrossed in their day to day work and have little time or energy to spend on activities that are future focused?

Well, my answer is an emphatic YES – this does work if done in the right way by involving the key stakeholders and working on the ground. Hand holding and working with the businesses is important, especially because we are working with the SME segment companies from both the sides. These companies usually do not have deep pockets and cannot afford full time focus on the long term or strategic business initiative and hence a platform where they can interact in a meaningful way with their counterparts from the other side can produce results.

Let us look at the real case study to elaborate my point.

As covered extensively in by the news and television media in Solapur and Nagpur, there was a visit to these cities by a German Delegation comprising of Founders and Owners of 11 SME companies in the sector of Air Pollution/Water/Wastewater Management, Baden-Württemberg International (BWI), Umwelttechnik (UTBW), Ministry of Economic Affairs representatives from the State of Baden-Württemberg and representatives of the City of Karlsruhe. The visit to Nagpur on 31st Jan and 1st Feb was planned, managed and executed by Lets Bridge IT in association with Vidarbha Industries Association (VIA). This 27-member delegation was led by Dr. Frank Mentrup, Lord Mayor of Karlsruhe. This delegation visit was facilitated



Mr. Jay Motghare of Nirmitee Robotics and Mr. Andre Schulte-Sudhoff of SCHUKO Bad Saulgau GmbH & Co. while signing the deal.

by Lets Bridge IT, the official representatives of State of Baden Württemberg (Germany) for Maharashtra.

The key feature of this visit was the focused business-to-business interactions between the German visiting companies and like-minded businesses from Nagpur. The positive outcome of the visit was the business collaboration agreement between the Nagpur based start-up Nirmitee Robotics and a well-established German company SCHUKO Bad Saulgau GmbH & Co. where the German company will focus on promoting the indigenous technology in the European Market.

Nirmitee Robotics (www.nirmiteerobotics.com) is a pioneer HVAC Air Duct Cleaning Company based in Nagpur (India). The company specializes in Ozone treatment and Sterilization of HVAC Air Ducts. The company has developed its own patented, air duct inspection and air duct cleaning robots. This technology has been already used for key Indian businesses like the Indian Railways, Thermal Power Stations, Hospitals, Hotels etc. Nirmitee Robotics was established in 2005 by a group of young, dedicated and motivated professionals.

Schuko (www.schuko.de) is a family owned and owner managed company from the south west of Germany with a pedigree of industrial solutions. They have a reputation in exhaust and filtrations system. As one of the leading European experts, they offer innovative technology that is made in Germany presenting customized solutions which set benchmarks in performance and profitability as well as in reliability and long service life. They offer services so that Schuko system can provide an end to end solution i.e. consulting, planning and project development, manufacturing, delivery and assembly,

commissioning, maintenance, training of staff.

During the Nagpur Business to Business connect event arranged at VIA, the owners of Nirmitee Robotics and Schuko were brought together for a round of initial discussions. They really hit it out in the first meeting with the Schuko making a quick de-tour to the Nirmitee premises to see the real time work been done there. Intense discussions followed over the next day or so culminating in an initial agreement between the two companies. Schuko appreciated Nirmitee's technology and found that this technology has huge market, long term business, repetitive business as well as the work itself has social touch. Mr. Andre Schulte-Sudhoff, Schuko, informed that Schuko has directly entered into an agreement with Nirmitee Robotics and will be the market consultants for Nirmitee Robotics. His company plans to introduce Nirmitee's unique technology in entire Europe initially focusing on Italy, Germany and Romania. He also informed that SCHUKO will provide initial marketing support and necessary guidance to set Nirmitee's business across these countries.

Contrary to the popular belief, in this case, the technology developed in Nagpur is been taken to the European Market by the German company. There has been good progress and discussions on spreading this beyond Germany to other European countries.

The German delegation has shared a positive feedback on their maiden visit to Nagpur & Solapur, they have plans to explore more possibilities for partnerships with regional industries in similar sector. Actively emanating from the German delegation visit, there are discussions happening between various other companies and progress is been made to create a business win-win for both sides.

Mr. Andre Schulte-Sudhoff said, "The product of Nirmitee Robotics helps the people to reduce the risks through dust, particles and viruses by the automatic cleaning system. The company has a real high potential to be a game changer in the market."

Mr. Jay Motghare (Nirmitee Robotics) indicated that the deal will shows the potential of the technology development happening under the Start-up India initiative and believes that they will get good traction in the European market.

About Let's Bridge IT

Let's Bridge IT is an organization based out of Freiburg (Germany) and Pune (India) and dedicated to fostering collaboration between Germany and India for the past 17 years. In close working with the Indian companies, Industry Associations and Government (Local as well as State), the organization has developed excellent understanding of the Indian Ecosystem. As part of Lets-Bridge IT, Shri. Ashish Pandit (Partner) and Ms. Iris Becker (Founder) represent the German State of Baden-Württemberg in Maharashtra.

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