

## Channelizing Software Expertise

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A 100 percent growth rate during the last two years is no small achievement for ShawMan Software, and definitely not a deterrent for the company in its quest to dream big and better its business than before. ShawMan Software, an industry standard in the Indian hospitality business, is rapidly expanding its presence in the retail, leisure, knowledge & travel verticals. "We aim to strengthen as a quality-oriented software boutique, that's harnessing the power of technology through its mission-critical applications that cater to the best in the business," says Y Shekar, COO, ShawMan Software.



For over a decade, ShawMan Software - an ISO 9001 - 2000 company simmered software applications for the hospitality and food services. Encompassing more than a thousand installations of various kinds for fast food, take-away and fine-dining outlets, ShawMan has become the benchmark for point-of-sale and materials management systems for stand-alone properties and international and domestic restaurant chains. The concept of personalized services is now slowly being introduced in the leisure, travel and manpower segments, where ShawMan provides software applications and consultancy services.

According to Shekar, hotel operations have been catalyzed by the booming real estate industry and also by the make-over trend, which is prompting hotels to adopt professional automated solutions, and modern amenities and look-and feel. "There's a greater need for computerization, transparency, and speed in operations. With the concept of service apartments fast picking up, it is boom time for all others associated with it," feels 45-year old Shekar. The company's robust roadmap to explore new technology domains and chug along with channels compels us to feature ShawMan Software in our 'Fast Track' section

### **The Buoyant Hospitality Segment**

Be it 'touch screen' operations or a powerful kitchen display system, or remote printers working simultaneously at a kitchen, bar and cashier's desk or a customer interface based on the use of smart cards and PDA, ShawMan has offered innovative solutions in the domestic hospitality arena. Property Management System [PMS] which includes reservations, rooms management, customer folio and settlement is a freeware license. However, with internet driving our lives, ShawMan provides centralized Materials Management Systems as well as POS Systems for management and control purposes. Even now, ShawMan is working on technology that will eventually become a norm for automated check-ins, instant recognitions and timely customer satisfaction.

ShawMan's Customer Feedback System is part of the CRM application suite that is aimed at building customer loyalty through better understanding of customer preferences. Employee-related applications, such as HR management, talent management, training and staffing and employee satisfaction surveys are a few applications from the ShawMan knowledge management suite. This helps hotels to recruit and groom staff through e-tests, as well as through a powerful multi-level appraisal system, adds Shekar.

## **The First Mover Advantage**

The company's ability to translate technology into business benefits has catapulted it to an enviable position in the market. Recalls Shekar, "One of our major deployments started with a popular MNC setting up its first outlet in Delhi with ShawMan's products. "ShawMan won the deal against an international leader to bring about India's first touch-screen operated POS system across various locations. That trend continues till date," says a proud Sekhar. The evaluation team at a leading international airport chose ShawMan's solutions to cater to various kinds of airport-based needs, even before the systems went live and the airport was inaugurated.

Through strategic alliances and in-house development, ShawMan will offer ERP solutions for the hospitality industry that would cater to highly specialized services like spas, wellness management centers and heightened personalized guest services, in addition to materials and room and revenue management. Customer recognition through RFID technology has recently been added to the repertoire to recognize VIP guests even before they walk up to an employee for service at a hotel. "RFI-based applications prepare the employee to give the best service that's due to the VIP guest - just when it is required," informs Shekar.

## **Moving Beyond Software Sales**

ShawMan Software, reconstituted in 2007 as a private limited firm, today has over 22 SKUs of tailor-made software packages for the hospitality, retail, knowledge management and emerging markets. ShawMan's association with world leaders like MicroSoft, IBM, Intel and Dell makes for many more compelling offerings for a complete automation of a property. The development team of ShawMan regularly leverages the architecture of Microsoft for its doc net based applications for its specialized software packages. Selling POS IBM hardware and servers to its customer base, the company recently added Dell laptops, desktops and servers to its portfolio.

Though 90 percent of the revenues emerge from software sales and implementation, ShawMan's next leap is to offer end-to-end solutions to its customer base. This would involve networking, traffic management and other solutions in the hospitality and services industry. Shekar reasons, "Direct interaction with decision-makers makes up for a substantial portion of sales in the hospitality vertical." However, with changing trends in the hospitality industry, there are professional teams that get involved in the selection of vendors and solutions. Besides products, these largely involve a solutions approach, technology road-map and commercials from a cost of ownership perspective, he says. With an enhanced portfolio of hardware offerings, ShawMan foresees hardware contributing more to its revenues.

## **Going the Channel Way**

ShawMan's Middle East operations are completely indirect, through channel partners. The company does use channels in India, off late though, to expand its market reach, says Shekar. However channel sales constitute less than 5 percent of the company's revenues. "Hitherto, it was almost a one-on-one interaction with decision-makers that led to a sale, but now customers are looking for multiple solutions from a single vendor, which makes it attractive for principals and channels to work together," explains Shekar. The bid to make properties to look best-in-class, right from building automation to guest feedback, these demands can be fulfilled by specialists or large system integrators who can provide end-to-end automation solutions, he says.

ShawMan is soon to finalize its first national SI for its suite of software packages. They have a strong customer base in tier 1 and tier 2 cities which will help us get “more feet on the street”, Shekar says. Being a 100 percent indigenous developer of software suites, Shawman allows channels to leverage our technical expertise to offer value proposition for customers, in consultation with our R & D team, he adds.

### **The Dream Run Continues**

The company’s first priority is to consolidate its leadership in the marketplace and help channels do the same. “We are already leaders, as far as head-count is concerned for a software product company, in the domestic hospitality domain. We do foresee doubling our knowledge strength in the next 18 to 24 months,” says Shekar. Apart from RFID, there are developments taking place at ShawMan to help decision-makers access business critical information from completely disconnected environments through concepts of mobility, wireless devices and services on software.

Shekar’s dream is to catapult ShawMan to be recognized as the ‘People best solution’ in the world. The new verticals that ShawMan is set to tap include retail and the emerging markets in the leisure activities segment, such as golf and spas. We expect to double our revenues to Rs 20 crores during this financial year, summed a confident Shekar.