

Giving visual appeal to engineering projects

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Dipayan Banerjee, Director & CEO of Anthelion. — Ashoke Chakrabarty

'Animation can show things in an order and takes much lesser time'

As an engineering student, Dipayan Banerjee was passionate about animation. Teachers, however, called him “superficial”.

During his nine-month stint with an engineering company, the 30-year-old IIT-Kharagpur mechanical engineering graduate was perturbed by the fact that engineers quite often were not able to visualise the work they were doing. It prompted him to open an engineering visualisation company in 2008.

With India's growing acceptance of visual communication in engineering for training and marketing, the Kolkata-based entrepreneur is confident of steady growth in the coming years.

Banerjee, who is the co-founder and director of Anthelion Technology Pvt Ltd, has worked on 45 projects over the past five-and-a-half years in the engineering and real estate sectors.

“Our USP is that we understand engineering. So, we are able to communicate with the engineering companies better than others,” says Banerjee.

Given Anthelion's expertise, he feels, it is more a partner to the animation industry than a peer. The company makes animated films and visual presentation contents for projects, products, processes and company profiles for the engineering industry. “Currently, our focus is on engineering visualisation,” Banerjee says.

Early days

The journey for Banerjee and his friend Shashi Prabha Sharma, who has a substantial investment in the company, has not been easy.

The concept of making an animated film or visual presentation with video content for engineering projects was new in India.

Besides, this venture into a niche segment made fund-raising even more challenging. Anthelion secured seed funding of Rs 10 lakh in 2009. The rest, Rs 27.5 lakh, was raised internally.

Since then, efforts to convince venture capitalists went in vain. “We have approached a lot of VCs. Nobody is ready to fund us unless we have revenues of a few million dollars,” Banerjee says.

Anthelion is looking to put in place a project management team, as it aspires to grow.

landmark projects

Having started off with a real estate project in Kolkata, Banerjee's zeal helped him bag orders for landmark

engineering projects such as the Bandra Worli Sea Link in Mumbai and ONGC's Mumbai High North offshore asset (oil and gas platform).

Promotion of animated films on these projects on social networking platforms too got him recognition.

Apart from providing visual communication solutions on hardcore engineering, Anthelion has been offering a competitive price for having a base in Kolkata.

"We try to offer our solutions at 30-40 per cent lower than the market," Banerjee adds.

Interestingly, during the slowdown of 2008-09, the company bagged orders to the tune of nearly Rs 40 lakh, as it was offering innovative products at a reasonable price.

"Animation can show things in an order and takes much lesser time. It has more advantages, provided it is done in a near-natural way," Banerjee says.

Overseas focus

Anthelion is looking forward to at least 25-30 orders a year beginning the next fiscal. It posted revenue of Rs 25 lakh in 2012-13 and has bagged eight orders so far this fiscal.

"Given the rise in demand for visual communication for engineering projects, our cash flows are expected to be better for the next five years," Banerjee says.

Apart from domestic orders, Anthelion received queries from the US and Germany recently.

"Our next aim is to focus on taking the company to global markets like the US, Europe and South-East Asia," Banerjee says.

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