SALA: PASSION FOR THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY

SALA Enterprises started off in 1992 as a small company with only three employees, marketing electronic dictionaries and computer peripherals. Evolving from such humble beginnings, today, SALA stands tall as a leading IT company in Sri Lanka, and is a key player in the country’s communication and IT industry. Chinthaka Wijewickrama, Managing Director and driving force behind SALA Enterprises speaks to Business Today of the wide range of innovative products they offer and of the company’s commitment to making the latest technology affordable and available to Sri Lankans from all walks of life.

By Ayesha Inoon | Photography by Menaka Aravinda

When Chinthaka Wijewickrama returned to Sri Lanka from the USA in 1992 with a Degree in Engineering and nine years of experience, he realised that there was great enthusiasm among people to learn English as well as a need for technology that would help them achieve this aim. Considering these factors and seeing the potential for it, he launched SALA Enterprises as a marketer of electronic dictionaries. Today the business has grown to encompass a broad array of IT related products, as well as communication equipment and is the market leader in the wireless equipment range, ADSL modems and routers as well as in fixed line telephones.

In 2008 SALA Enterprises was chosen as the overall winner at INFOTEL, the premier exhibition for IT and communication equipment in Sri Lanka, proving their strength and leadership in the IT field. “Looking back, we were the first to introduce, the pendrive commercially, the laser printed trilingual keyboard (Sinhala /Tamil/ English), key board scanner and Panel PC to name a few” says Chinthaka Wijewickrama. “When looking at the communications sector we are the only company who deal in the whole range of customer premises equipment from fixed line telephones and mobile telephones to ADSL equipment, wireless equipment and HSDPA equipment.”

“Right now our main focus is on mobile phones,” says Wijewickrama, adding that the company has had the honour of being officially introduced as the distributor for Samsung mobile phones this month. “Samsung mobile phones are the number one for profitability worldwide” he says, adding that with over ten million mobile phone subscribers in the country they see a bright future with Samsung.

Another mobile phone brand marketed by SALA Enterprises is Gaoxinqi. They are reputed to be one of the largest manufacturers for mobile phones in China, says Wijewickrama, and Sala Enterprises collaborates with them in providing TV mobile phones as well as two-SIM mobile phones to the Sri Lankan market. Approval from the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka has been obtained for these products.

SALA Enterprises is the local representative for several leading international brands

including Prolink, which is a household name. The company is also the number one supplier for UPS equipment for which there is a great demand in the country due to the constant power fluctuations. “The keys to our success are reliable products at an affordable price and reliable after sales service handled by a dedicated and skilled staff. I feel proud and satisfied that we have contributed something to the country, and to know that the people believe in us,” says Wijewickrama.

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Delux is another brand which is the only INTEL certified manufacturer for casings from China. Other computer equipment such as keyboards and speakers are also available from Delux. A wide range of speakers to suit diverse requirements is available under the brand name Divoom. Providing simple cost-effective and technologically advanced IT solutions is among SALA Enterprises’ specialties, and the brand Hasee, one of the leading brands in China meets this requirement with its range of reliable notebooks. It also supplies panel PC’s, in which the CPU is included in the monitor thereby saving space while giving users the benefits of a conventional desktop.

SALA Enterprises continues to supply Seiko dictionaries which were its initial products at its inception over 16 years ago.

Safa voice recorders are another convenient gadget sold by SALA. Entertainment is another area they focus on, and Car MP3 and MP4 players are among the range of popular entertainment equipment. In the current economic context with companies trying to find ways to use time and money more effectively, the advanced technology of video conferencing has become a necessity for many organisations. SALA has been appointed the distributor for Kedakom, a video conferencing system that enables users to conduct meetings from diverse local and international locations as though they are in the same room. In keeping with their mission to provide the best technology to Sri Lankan citizens as well as contributing to the development of the country, SALA also plans to introduce certain energy saving equipment that can reduce electricity consumption by up to 30% in the near future.

“I am an engineer by profession, and my engineering background helped me understand the industry and the needs of the customer,” says Wijewickrama who has also lectured at the Sri Jayawardanepura University so as to keep in touch with his field. He adds with pride, “we have been here for the past 16 years and come a long way – we plan to grow to greater heights in the future and continue to introduce new technology at affordable prices to Sri Lankans.”