



# Trading opportunities in the **LED indoor displays market**

Customisation, design solutions and after sales support are just some of the benefits provided by the trade channel partners of LED indoor display manufacturers. LED Bazaar delves into the market to understand the importance of these channel partners and explore the opportunities in this line of business

By Samonway Duttagupta

## Channel partners create the connection with consumers

There is an interesting school of thought which believes that the best way to sell LED indoor display solutions is through the right trade channel partner. The reason for this is the valuable experience these channel partners gain from the constant on-field connections they build with the end consumers. This also allows the channel partners to use their field knowledge as a powerful tool to provide custom-based solutions to consumers. In a way, this increases the efficiency of the LED indoor display manufacturers. Moreover, the 'experience centres'

set up by the channel partners provide an extra motivation to the end consumers, for nothing pushes the sales of these products more than an assurance about their quality. The visual experience is of paramount importance.

## Blurring the lines between suppliers and channel partners

Manufacturers of LED indoor displays cannot operate single-handedly. Like most other businesses, they also need suppliers for the different parts of a display that go into making an LED indoor display solution. These suppliers are the channel partners themselves. For example, Xtreme Media's network of channel partners not only includes

resellers and traders who ensure the company's products reach the end consumers, but also includes display providers, computer systems integrators, project management companies, audio-visual companies and consultants.

So it is evident that there is ample value addition done by these channel partners. While it's true that the channel partners can't run their businesses without the manufacturers, the manufacturers can't give the finishing touches that customers want without the channel partners. One can't survive without the other.

Barco, also a leading manufacturer of LED indoor displays, has chosen another route to sell its products, compared to the usual



ways in which channel partners function. Barco takes the help of partners only for product integration, designs and installation. Mandar Gupte, sales director, entertainment and corporate division, Barco India, confirms, "Considering that these are high value products involving complex civil, mechanical and electrical installations, we work directly with our key customers, and our large systems integrators and partners. These are not regular retail products and the items are imported only after receiving the order."

## Prerequisites for a channel partner

The importance of having channel partners in the field of LED indoor displays is being felt throughout the industry, and many companies are being prompted to utilise their skills and expertise for the benefit of LED indoor display manufacturers. It actually opens up a bright and long-term business opportunity for them. So what exactly enables a company to become an efficient channel partner?

Experts in the LED indoor display value chain point out a few key things. The first and foremost is domain knowledge. Kofi Annan, former secretary general of the United Nations (UN), once said, "Knowledge is power." Without the knowledge of what manufacturers offer and what

the end consumers need, one can never become a successful channel partner because what matters is being an efficient bridge between the two ends. The right knowledge can also help provide the right solutions to end consumers and, in turn, help drive sales for the manufacturers.

Another important factor for a channel partner's success is location. While aiming to be the channel partner of a certain manufacturer, the company must consider whether it is located in the right place to cater to the manufacturer's target audience. But even if the company is not at the right location, it must have a stronghold on and the ability to penetrate the market.

Sanket Rambhia, chairman and MD of Xtreme Media Pvt Ltd, points out another important requirement, which is the reputation and past record of the channel partner. Even if the company has never served as a channel partner in the past and is exploring the prospect, it must have a good reputation for whatever role it has earlier played in the industry.

## Service, support and benefits are ensured

As pointed out earlier in this article, channel partners of LED indoor displays provide unmatched services that matter a lot while making final contact points with the end consumers. Xtreme Media, a leading manufacturer of LED displays,

utilises both direct selling as well as the trade channel partners. But considering the kind of services its channel partners provide, Rambhia points out, "We market our products through a wide network of resellers and partners who, many a time, do concept selling for us. As the products require considerable explanation of their technicalities, clients prefer to give their vote of confidence to trusted industry partners and resellers."

Sharing knowledge about the products becomes one of the key aspects when trade channel partners are involved. In the case of LED indoor displays, the solutions on offer for the consumers are discussed in detail with the channel partners. This enables these partners to improvise on these solutions and offer them to the consumers in the form of an impressive package. There are yet more benefits of having channel partners. One of the most important services that these partners provide is the after sales support.

A trade channel partner can always prove to be of great help in the business of LED indoor displays, and manufacturers have now understood their importance. This opens up new avenues for channel partners who have the expertise in LED based products, and can hence offer experiential services to customers. **LE3**

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