

## Training sights on growth

By Chong Choon Yee

FOR an IT company, Genovate Solutions is an exception.

This is because the company has seen its revenues and profits double each year since 2000 despite a difficult business environment for dot.com ventures.

And revenue is expected to double again to between \$12 million and \$13 million this year, barring events such as another SARS outbreak or a Sept 11-type terrorist attack.

The company offers business solutions, product development, training and education. And it operates on a margin of profit that is between 10 and 15 per cent.

But Genovate wouldn't be what it is now if not for its chief executive and co-founder, Mr J Anton Ravindran, who is in his early 40s.

When he joined the company as co-founder in 2000, it was in the midst of a restructuring.

Till then, the company – which was started in 1997 – had a “narrow” focus on IT projects and providing outsourcing solutions.

Recalling the early days, he said: “We had to diversify and yet intensify our efforts – we needed to have both breadth and depth in terms of the businesses we were in. Previously, the company was profitable but growing slowly.”

The company ventured into the IT training business in 2000 and became authorised training partners with the likes of SAP, IBM and Computer Associates.

Today, the company is the sole partner with SAP for training in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and the western states of India.

Genovate's profits keep rising amid tough times, thanks in part to boss who wants to make a difference



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It ventured into the training business because it felt that being in the IT business, it would be in a better position to gauge which what would benefit people in the working world, unlike most of the other training providers which are not in the IT consulting and solutions business.

Today, a significant portion of its revenue comes from SAP-related activities, which include training, consultancy and maintenance.

Out of nearly 150 staff spread over Singapore, Malaysia, Korea, Australia, India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia, 100 are based here.

Its education business, under the KnowledgeWindow Asia Pacific name, is doing well too.

The company currently has about 350 students in its diploma, advanced diploma and degree programmes since it was started six months ago.

Its degree programmes are offered in conjunction with the University of Sunderland, University of South Australia

and Pace University of New York.

Mr Ravindran also said that the company is in the process of inking a new deal that will add a new “dimension” to its “portfolio of offerings”.

Before joining Genovate, Mr Ravindran worked in IT behemoths such as Sun Microsystems, IBM Labs and Computer Associates, as well as local education provider Informatics, and Singalab, a joint venture between IBM and National Computer Board.

He attained his bachelor of science degree in IT from the University of Texas, and then an MBA from the University of North Texas.

He lived for nearly 15 years in Texas before moving to Singapore in the early 90s to be with his lawyer wife, who is a Singaporean.

Now, both an American citizen and permanent resident here, the professed believer in “making a difference” sits on the management committee of the e-Club for the Marine Parade GRC.