

Infosat goes Quality

In TELE-satellite 03/2007 we ran a story about satellite wholesaler INFOSAT from Bangkok, Thailand, followed in the next issue by a report covering the manufacturing of dishes at INFOSAT. Now it was time to check how things have progressed in the meantime. So off we went, to Bangkok. The first surprise met our eyes even before we entered the premises: it was a huge poster on the facade of the INFOSAT office complex.

Niran Tangpiroontham is the owner and managing director of INFOSAT and he insisted on this visual presentation of his company's successes over the last twelve years. Even from far away the huge poster draws attention to the company. It shows two of the dishes that are manufactured by INFOSAT, one being black and the other one being a white model. "Did you know that our range now includes coloured dishes as well?" Niran asks and puzzles us to some extent. Coloured mesh dishes? Now that's something we haven't seen before. Here's Niran's account of what led to this decision: "One of our clients is AMATA, a company in Cambodia. Their corporate identity is based on the colour purple and that's why

we started to manufacture purple dishes for this particular client." Other large customers in Thailand get their INFOSAT dishes also in red and pink. These are unusual colours that create a lot of attention. "Silver coloured dishes have been on offer for about a year, these new colours have only complemented our range for a few months," explains Niran.

When asked by us how his company has performed Niran quickly provides some impressive hard facts: the staff count was 60 last year and has meanwhile increased to 70. The annual sales volume increased from 7.5 million USD in 2006 to 9 million USD this year, and he expects another 20% rise for 2008. "While last year some 40%

of sales were generated in the professional segments, mainly for cable reception, the TVRO segment has increased to 75%. This can be attributed to our focus on improving the quality of our products." The ZIMPLE Box 3 satellite receiver offered by INFOSAT which was tested by TELE-satellite only recently, was audited by the Thai Institute for Electrical Equipment and was awarded a seal of approval. "Even the production process for our dishes has been audited," says Niran and proudly shows us a sticker which can be found on the packaging of every single dish leaving the factory. "This certificate was awarded to INFOSAT by the Thai Export Department and means that INFOSAT is a state-certified company fulfilling all quality norms and export regulations." The certificate is examined on an annual basis and re-issued if all criteria are met. This way the Thai government makes sure that its quality standards are met.

Drivers on this expressway in Bangkok's north are greeted by the huge INFOSAT poster. Four blocks of this complex belong to INFOSAT and house administrative offices as well as the warehouse for small parts such as receivers, cables and LNBS.



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▲ Each INFOSAT package leaving the factory bears a quality seal awarded by the Thai government and being re-audited on an annual basis.



▲ Niran's latest marketing idea: mesh dishes in various colours. From left to right: silver, pink, purple, red and good old black. "Blue dishes are also in the pipeline," says Niran. And that's a bit of relief, as the current range of colours is... well... unusual, to say the least.



▲ Niran Tangpiroontham, INFOSAT owner and managing director in the Quality Control Room: it is here that the features of ZIMPLE Box 3 receivers are checked. Not a real problem, as almost 40 permanently installed dishes are installed on the roof.

Niran has also invested heavily in quality improvements for the dish manufacturing workshop. Professional machinery is now being used in the production process. According to Niran "the quality of our dishes

has improved to such an extent that a 1.3 m dish we produce today has the same reception capacity as a 1.6 m dish that we used to manufacture before." Niran has put the enormous improvements to use by extend-

ing the range of products on offer. "Today we can offer dishes with diameters of 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 2.1 and 3.0 metres." The best selling product for the local market is the 1.3 m dish which 60% of our customers go for, followed by the 1.5 m dish requested by 20 of our customers, and the 1.6 m dish. Larger versions with 1.8 m or more are mostly exported. "Just recently we received a request for a large dish, this time for Nigeria," Niran reveals his company's order status. We're talking about a complete container filled with dishes, because everything less wouldn't justify the considerable transport costs.



◀ New at INFOSAT: this new punching machine is used in-house to punch the meshes into the aluminium sheet. This way the quality can be checked first-hand.



▲ The pressing machine visible in the background is one of the reasons for improved quality: it presses the cut and formed components into the right parabolic shape. Previously, the formed components were put on a mirror frame and clamped in. Thanks to shaping before assembly, the measuredness of the parabolic shape is now increased.



▲ Finished dishes waiting for dispatch.

Finally, Niran draws our attention to an empty plot of land. "This is where I will build a new factory – three times the size of the current complex and ready for use by 2010." Niran is an ambitious man and apparently he has a nose for detecting new market niches. A noteworthy success story in the satellite business!

▼ What is a plot of unused land today will house Niran's new manufacturing plant in two years' time – offering three times the space of the current factory.

