

SPAUN at COMINTOUCH in Dubai



■ General manager Mohan Kumar with the SPAUN multi-switch range, which is the pillar of success for COMINTOUCH.



Made for each other! That's how we can best sum up the relationship between German multi-switch manufacturer SPAUN and Dubai-based trading and project company COMINTOUCH. After all, SPAUN would not be able to profit from a comfortable market share in the Middle East without COMINTOUCH, while on the other hand COMINTOUCH's rock-solid growth in recent years is largely contributable to SPAUN products. Make no mistake about it, COMINTOUCH generates 80% of its turnover with products made by SPAUN.

We visited COMINTOUCH on the third floor of a rather nondescript office building located in a commercial area in Dubai's east, near the airport and close to the (invisible) border to the Emirate of Sharjah.

The company was founded in 2001 by managing director Mohan Kumar. "It was on 31 January, to be precise," Mohan Kumar recalls, "and the first two employees I hired back then are still with me today."

It all started with a multi-LNB dish for which COMINTOUCH had exclusive distribution rights at the time. "Unfortunately, though, this dish brought with it a number of problems: Installers back then were not in a position to correctly align this rather tricky antenna." The dish was used for simultaneous reception of NILESAT and HOTBIRD, "but in the end the dish was just a little too small and offered virtually no bad weather tolerance unless perfectly installed

and aligned." Half a year later the end seemed nigh – COMINTOUCH had dispatched almost 2,000 of these dishes to local dealerships, but these in turn could not sell them on because installers refused to work with the dishes.

Mohan Kumar did what seemed right at this junction and began to distribute satellite receivers. He cooperated with a Korean manufacturer and assisted in customising their receivers for the local market. After a while, Mohan Kumar

even founded his own company by the name of ORBICLE and has never since stopped distributing satellite receivers and – more recently – also HDTV and IPTV boxes. Ingenious as he is, Mohan Kumar steadily increased COMINTOUCH's portfolio to also cover the CCTV, intercom and access control segments.

Yet, the turning point in his business career occurred when he met the then SPAUN managing director Frie-

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enough, Mohun Kumar expects a doubling of sales for 2010 as well. We asked COMINTOUCH sales manager Sabarish where all those SPAUN products are actually sold. "80% stay in the United Arab Emirates," he explains.

"18% are shipped to neighbouring countries such as Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. The remaining 2% result from purchases made by North African dealers who get in touch with us."



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"That was in September of 2004," Mohan Kumar remembers. Even in the first business year sales of SPAUN products had reached unprecedented volumes and by 2009 turnover has again increased fourfold. As if that wasn't

■ Up on the roof of the COMINTOUCH office building in Dubai: A technician checks the satellite signal using a SPAUN signal meter, with the skyline of Sharjah, an emirate bordering Dubai, as backdrop.



■ On his laptop computer project manager Subodh Tawadia shows us the equipment list for a current project: installation of SPAUN multi-switches for an extremely classy complex of villas in Abu Dhabi.

■ Sales manager Sabarish in the reception lounge of the COMINTOUCH administrative offices.

Which brings us to the question of how many sales offices and members of staff COMINTOUCH has. Managing director Mohan Kumar has the details: "We run a shop at the local Dubai satellite souk with two employees. Nine people work right here in our offices, three of which are technicians in charge of project planning and service."

Mohan Kumar also fills us in with information regarding an "office in Qatar with a staff of three, and we're currently planning an office in Saudi Arabia for 2011." All these expansion plans seem to be more than worthwhile, with sales of SPAUN products already picking up in Qatar. With an office in the huge market of Saudi Arabia the same is expected to happen there as well.

We wanted to know from sales manager Sabarish which products are in high demand. "We generate 30% of sales with SPAUN multi-switches featuring 17 input lines, which means they can be used for simultaneous reception of four different satellites. Another 30% of customers opt for the 9-input multi-switch which is a perfect match for simultaneous reception of two different positions. 20% buy the multi-switch model with 13 input lines."

COMINTOUCH is not only a re-seller of SPAUN products, but also a big player in the area of project planning in Dubai and beyond. Project manager Subodh Tawadia is in charge of this segment and proudly tells us that COMINTOUCH is currently in the process of installing a satellite reception system for a top-notch villa estate in Al Ain, at the border to Oman in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

"A total of 200 outlets need to be installed in seven villas and various



■ Working with COMINTOUCH from scratch: technical manager Sreejith at his desk.

adjoining buildings, with SPAUN products serving as the backbone of the installation." ARABSAT, NILESAT, HOT-BIRD and ASIASAT 3S will be received with this setup.

Not only is COMINTOUCH well established in Abu Dhabi's high society, but also right next door, where the Emirates Airlines crew accommodation building is located in the Dubai Global Village close to the airport and to the COMINTOUCH office. SPAUN multi-switches with 13 input lines are used to provide ARABSAT, NILESAT and HOTBIRD channels to a total of 2.650 outlets," project manager Subodh Tawadia proudly reveals.

Even the World Trade Center which hosts the annual CABSAT satellite fair

is partially equipped with SPAUN multi-switches installed by COMINTOUCH, yet the company itself will not be represented at CABSAT. "As a wholesale dealer and project planner we decided to rather organise seminars once a year, in which we present and explain SPAUN products in great detail," Mohan Kumar explains. "Last time we had 130 participants!"

It's true, the two are really made for each other: SPAUN was able to considerably increase its sales in the Middle East region thanks to devoted COMINTOUCH support, and in turn COMINTOUCH was able to grow impressively with the help of SPAUN products. Talk about synergies...