**Essential Technology support to enable Ramalingam Foods International Expansion**

**Case Understanding**

Ramalingam which was found in 1965 was known for its authentic south Indian freshly cooked meals and filter coffee. Ramalingam Foods began selling Idli-dosa batter and packets of authentic south Indian chutneys. These creative ideas kept them afloat during the emergency, and it eventually became their major business since people found it convenient to carry these batter and chutney packets home from work and enjoy the delicacies in the comfort of their own homes. Mr Vijay Ramalingam (son of Mr Venkatesh Ramalingam) took over the business in 1990 whose intention is to expand the company with some new age business ideas. The Idli-dosa batter has a short shelf life and is perishable, shipping would be difficult, so they came up with the idea of making powdered Idli-dosa batter. The new product was an immediate success. They have diversified products in their portfolio.

Company’s management have noticed that some people buy their instant mixes in India and then sell them in foreign nations via their businesses, mainly in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and England. These shopkeepers are usually people of Indian descent who have resided in those nations. During their visits to India, they/their known people buy significant quantities of products and send them to their respective countries. In these countries, some eateries have begun to use these fast mixes.

Mr Vijay has no prior expertise in foreign business; nonetheless, they have recruited our firm as a business consultant for worldwide market expansion and put aside a budget of INR 50 crore for FY 2019-20. During our conversation with them we also got to know that Ramalingam Foods lacked the requisite rights and licences for international operations.

They don't have the finance or commercial ability to join more than one foreign market at a time, so they're looking for a strategy for international expansion to a region that has greatest potential and which can generate higher profits for the company and can also stop the selling of products by other individuals in those regions.

**Solution Summary**

As Ramalingam Foods seeks to expand, we have targeted the Middle East, with nations such as the UAE, Dubai, Abu-Dhabi, Sharjah, Umm-Al-Quwain, Ajman, Ras-Al-Khaimah, Fujairah, Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain on our list. This international expansion necessitates the hiring of a large number of people for varied operations across these locations. The employment of technology, which implies innovation, can readily achieve this global recognition and expansion of the corporate market. The internet is having a significant impact on how international business is done. Nothing is more important to a company's success than having the correct technology in place.

**Key areas that need technology support**

1)Management should be aware of all events in one location, for which we will create a website that will provide a picture of the company's performance in a new territory.

2)Because we are hiring new employees who will be dispersed across several sites, we will need to ensure that they are all linked, which will need the purchase of software and subscriptions.

* **Office 365** : It's a cloud-based productivity and collaboration suite from Microsoft that combines all of the company's existing online applications (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote, Outlook, Publisher, Sway, and Access) into a single service, with Skype for Business and Microsoft Teams serving as the primary communication channels. This can assist the organization's staff in staying connected at all times and in any location.
* **ERP** (Enterprise Resolution Protocol) – ERP is a piece of software that helps businesses handle day-to-day tasks like accounting, procurement, project management, risk management, and compliance, as well as supply chain operations. This might aid in the management of the company's many sections.
* **CRM** (Customer Relationship Management)- It’s a piece of software that allows you to keep track of all of your company's client and potential customer contacts. The objective is straightforward: to improve commercial relationships. A customer relationship management system (CRM) aids businesses in staying in touch with customers, streamlining procedures, and increasing profits. This can aid in the distribution of websites and mobile apps to clients, as well as marketing.

3) We're also seeking for e-commerce sales where diverse end users, such as general customers, retailers, and restaurants, may make purchases and track their orders.

Aside from the aforementioned, a few basic items required to enable technology are

* Computers / Laptops & related accessories
* WIFI support in all office locations

**Solution(Management principles)**

### **Be Agile and User-Centric**

Although a variety of reasons may influence the decision to update IT, one overarching goal must be met: to deliver value. Every investment in technology should increase the advantages to end customers, whether through improved experiences, higher product quality, or cost-cutting and value-adding operational efficiencies.

Design and development should be done using recognised agile frameworks. Scrum (self-organizing teams), disciplined agile delivery (a process for team decision making), the scaled agile framework (which aligns multiple teams), DevOps (practises aimed at reducing software development time), and lean IT (a quality and continuous improvement approach) are just a few examples.

**Data Security & Compliance**

We should raise security awareness among all personnel because the offices and staff are dispersed across numerous places. Data sharing and protection should be governed by rules, guidelines, standards, and processes. Firewalls are used to protect the network.

**IT team at all office locations**

We are considering hiring 2-3 IT team members for each new office we open as part of our expansion. Because all of the development takes place before the project, the IT team will be responsible for resolving any technical issues that arise with the systems and software that we utilise. They'll also keep track of issues that can be used as improvements and retain a backlog of them.

**Training/Certification programs to Employees**

We should keep our personnel up to date on how to use the latest technology because technology is continually evolving. As a result, the IT team will be able to offer a few training or certification programmes in this area.

**General Management Principles**

* Global - a common best practice standard
* Accessible
* Confidential and secure
* Permit open flow of information
* Relevant to products needs/data format
* Real-time batch/lot location in products
* Consumer visibility of information
* Build food safety culture

**Technology Principles**

* Interoperability across technologies
* Up and down the supply chain
* Security levels of disclosure (different actors)
* Open standard
* Immutable
* Affordable
* Analysis/modelling Big data

**Few Solutions that IT development team will build for different stakeholders**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Stakeholder** | **Solution** | **Usage** |
| Management | Website & App, these can be rolled out using CRM software | Dashboard views to get the snapshot of performance and overall analysis & insights |
| Internal Departments | ERP software | Helps in internal co-ordination and employee management for departments like finance, HR, sales, marketing & IT |
| Customers & Retailers | Website & App using CRM Software | Helps in placing orders of the required product and to track them |

**Cost Estimation for technology support**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Software** | **Number of licenses** | **Price** | **Total Cost** |
| Office 365 E3 | ~. 750 | 1,440/month | 750\*1440\*12 = 1.3 Cr |
| ERP | 200-600 | NA | Approx. 1 Cr |
| CRM | NA | NA | Approx. 1 Cr |
| Desktop/Laptop | ~ 750 | 40000 | 750\*40000 = 3 Cr |
| IT Accessories(Headphones, cables, projectors..) | NA | NA | 10 Lakhs |
| WIFI | 11 offices | 20,000/month | 11\*20000\*12 = 26 Lakhs |
| Miscellaneous Expenses | NA | NA | 15 Lakhs |
| Total |  |  | **6.8 Cr ~= 7 Cr** |

**Conclusion**

Technology is transforming today’s business and it can help the business in

* Security
* Decision Making
* Saves Time & Money
* Better Customer Support
* Business Communication
* Marketing & Business Growth
* Resource Management & Globalization

So considering all the above factors, Ramalingam foods can invest major amounts on the technology support which can help the company in gaining better profits, good market share and also automates most of the things in longer run. Economies of scale or operating efficiency can also be achieved by making use of technology.