

## Success Story

### MAIA bringing intelligence into BI solutions



Wednesday, December 21, 2011

**By Priyanka Roy Chowdhury**

The amount of information that companies keep accumulating over a period of time can be mind-boggling. Companies may struggle, and eventually fail, to effectively use the information for decision making purposes. It was this problem that gripped the minds of Sanjay Mehta and his friends few years back and encouraged them to start a business catering to such requirements.

In conversation with Bizxchange, Sanjay Mehta, CEO of MAIA Intelligence reveals the story behind MAIA's growth from a start-up to a leading name in the sector.



*Edited excerpts of the interview:*

#### **Please share with us the story behind MAIA's inception. What were the initial challenges?**

Customers were happy with existing products, but often found that an enterprise resource planning (ERP) implementation alone would not suffice to meet their information needs. The opportunity to fill this gap spurred us to set up MAIA Intelligence, a business intelligence (BI) product company.

There is a wide choice of reporting tools in the market, including Business Object, Cognos and SAS, but they are expensive and hence, typically used only by the top officials. There was a need for BI at almost every level of an organisation. We started with the core idea of helping companies to take quicker decisions across all levels.

Like other start-ups, we too faced initial challenges. Though we had evaluated the competency of this core idea of starting a venture with BI software product, and had enough reasons to start up, the real challenge was finding the right funding agency. It was very difficult to convince a venture capitalist. It was harder to find an angel investor who would just let you do your job.

Another challenge we faced was finding the right people. It is very tough to find the right kind of people and it is tougher to keep them on board. Setting up was not that easy. Sometimes initial legal compliance may be a serious and time consuming job. The same rule applies to finding the right place and environment within the budget to start the operations, ensure daily cash flow, among other things.

Finding the first customer and generating demand for our software product was also a big challenge. However, we won our first customer and till date they are using our product.

## **What are the various services offered by MAIA?**

MAIA Intelligence develops and offers products and solutions in BI space based on innovative technology powered by a robust Microsoft stack with highly experienced technocrat team. MAIA's flagship product 1KEY Agile BI Suite, a comprehensive, single layer, ground-up built, interoperable easy-to-use, integrated with pick & choose module, multiple presentation layers caters to the MIS needs of customers and caters to the demand of all users (Strategic, Tactical & operational), small, medium or large corporates, all industry verticals in India and abroad. 1KEY can connect multiple database (Oracle, MS SQL, DB2, Sybase, Excel, My.SQL, etc.), multiple ERP, CRM, SCM, HRM applications (Microsoft Dynamic, Oracle E-Business Suite, Microsoft Navision, PeopleSoft, JD Edwards, Siebel, QAD MFG/Pro, Ramco, Tally, etc).



## **What are your key business strategies in this domain?**

MAIA Intelligence has always been a channel driven company with a conscious strategy to focus on R&D and marketing of our products and enable partners to fulfill demand. Our initial success shows that the partner-focused strategy is working well. Now we want to widen the partner base to expand the market for our products.

Partnering with MAIA Intelligence creates opportunities to promote, build, and deliver the benefits of CPM solutions and BI software to customers. Through partnership with consulting firms, software manufacturers and technology vendors, both MAIA Intelligence and its strategic partners leverage their collective strengths to offer integrated solutions that measure performance and improve profitability.

Our partners' involvement starts with problem analysis and reporting definition, moving from analytical descriptions through implementation, hardware choice, and at the end of the road, to system management and hosting. We have consulting partnership with the likes of Kale Consultants, Nelito Systems, Datamatics Ltd, Paramatrix, Tandon Information Systems, Agile FT, Mondial IT Consultants, Prism Informatics and Optima Global Solutions, who have helped us bring together the best of two worlds to create a winning combination – the capabilities of our solution offerings and the market expertise of our partners.

Once any consulting or OEM or reseller partner is engaged with us, we train their team on our product and equip them with all the technical and functional tools they would require during the customer implementations. On the marketing front we equip our partners with the brochures, evaluation licences, POC programs and customer events for CEOs, CFOs and CIOs. We conduct lead generation programs, training programs for their IT team, sales and marketing events.

MAIA Intelligence has a two-pronged marketing strategy for growing the business. It engages with the channel to bank on their existing customer relationship. The other approach we do is a lot of marketing, PR and communication activities for brand awareness and hype in the market. We conduct end-user training program for our existing and prospective partners and customers, participate and/or sponsor in the industry/technology events, newsletters, e-DMs targeting various industries, functions and domains, tele-calling for lead generation, website and blog promotion, social media optimisation (SMO), SEO, creating BI related forums on business-cum-social networking sites like LinkedIn, closely working with association of CIOs, partnering with technology giants like Microsoft, Intel, HP and Sybase for business networking and participation in their technology and business events, among other activities.

MAIA conducts various marketing seminars, workshops and quiz events within and outside India.

### **How would the recent partnership with TekMindz benefit MAIA?**

Tekmindz has rich experience in banking (for Infosys' Finacle), manufacturing (for ERP) and government sector (development and deployment of other customised software solutions and portals). Their expertise in database including Oracle shall help MAIA as a gateway to reach to their banking and other customers for BI.

Tekmindz has signed up as MAIA's consulting partner and they shall engage with their existing customers to propose and implement BI and give other related services. This partnership shall help MAIA expand its reach and knowhow.

We also look forward to develop the new 223 banking reports mandated by RBI in 1KEY BI with the help from Tekmindz and also pitch to their existing clients.

### **Please highlight some of the milestones achieved by MAIA.**

MAIA Intelligence has been recognised by the industry at large for its success:

- NASSCOM Top 100 IT INNOVATORS in 2007
- Microsoft published case study on MAIA Intelligence and 1KEY products
- Red Herring Finalist 100 Asia 2008
- Red Herring Finalist 100 Global 2009
- Red Herring Winner 100 Asia 2009
- India's Most Trusted IT Vendor by a CIO survey by The CTO Forum
- Microsoft's ISV Innovation Award 2010 winner
- CXO Award 2010 – Finalist for India's Business IT Innovation of the year

### **What are the ethics that are driving the company workforce?**

We have never thought of having written standards of ethical conduct. However, the successful business operation and reputation of MAIA Intelligence is built upon the principles of fair dealing and ethical conduct of our employees.

MAIA complies with all applicable laws and regulations and expects the same from its workforce to conduct business in accordance with the letter, spirit, and intent of all relevant laws and to refrain from any illegal, dishonest or unethical conduct.

### **What is the goal set by MAIA to increase market dominance?**

MAIA Intelligence has done pretty well till date in terms of market share against the established giants and has emerged as a strong leader in Operational BI space.

After having tasted initial success, each day that goes makes it easier for us to reach our goals. Being recognised as a significant player in the BI space by the industry, media and customers is our biggest achievement. We have created a brand and a market for ourselves on which we can bank upon in future.

### **What tips would you give to aspiring entrepreneurs?**

Do what you are passionate about, with required skills and experience. At the same time the business plan should be able to derive big opportunity for revenue. Also, constantly look for mentorship from a senior industry veteran who can help sharpen your vision further.

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