

NTL Lemnis - Roving to Lead the Country's LED Lighting Market



**Tushar Gupta, Executive Director
NTL Lemnis India Pvt. Ltd.**



Noida-headquartered NTL Electronics India Ltd. is India's leading and the most respected manufacturer of electronic products for the lighting industry. Known for its R&D and manufacturing capabilities, the company claims to be the pioneer in developing electronic ballasts perfectly suited to Indian conditions. Today, NTL's product portfolio comprises electronic control gears, ballasts, luminaires, LED drivers and LED lighting products being manufactured across three facilities with a cumulative capacity of 18 million units per month. Moving ahead with a well-defined, time-bound executable plan, NTL is determined to establish a global footprint for advanced lighting solutions.

It was in April 2012 that the two giants NTL and Lemnis Lighting decided to come together and formed a JV as NTL Lemnis India Pvt. Ltd. - a fully-owned subsidiary of NTL Electronics, for manufacturing & marketing LED solutions. According to the company, NTL Lemnis has been one of the major contributors to EESL's efficient lighting programme, while its brand Pharox has emerged as one of the most respected brands in the category. Recently, **Tushar Gupta** joined as the **Executive Director at NTL Lemnis India Pvt. Ltd.** to whom we, at **LED World**, met so as to know his way of taking the company's goal forward.

Since 2016, the young & dynamic Tushar has been instrumental in NTL Lemnis' operations that include sales & marketing, effective process development and its implementation to ensure smooth functioning of the organisation. Some of the major changes that have been brought in to effect since he took over at the helm include reduced go-to-market time, organisation restructuring, launching of applications-specific products and a consumer-focused business strategy to increase visibility across the channels and retail segment. He is a keen researcher and has published a case study on 'Family Business Management'. Following is the edited excerpts of what he shared with us:

How has been your journey at NTL Lemnis so far?

I began my career with NTL Electronics in 2011 as a Trainee, understanding the business and processes encompassing business development, sales, product development, supply chain, manufacturing, HR, administration, maintenance, commercial, financial and strategy. In 2012, I was given the responsibility of Middle East region where I was instrumental in conceptualising a sustainable business model and strategy for the expansion of firm's operations, developed distribution network in the quality conscious market and successfully established Brand Pharox from scratch. In the year 2015, I went abroad for completing my Masters in management and in June 2016, I came back to serve the company again. It's been more than a year now that I am closely involved in the day-to-day activities of the company.

What changes did you mark when you rejoined after the break?

For initial few days, it took time me understand the working of all the departments. NTL has always been a customer-focused company and I found that this focus had increased manifold in the last one year. In addition, the technological advancements that had happened in the industry were also being absorbed, and I found that our design team was working on the new technologies at a furious pace. Further, the company took a more focused approach towards R&D with which comes the quality that keeps evolving with time.

What technological advancements are you indicating?

Technological developments in the lighting industry are on many fronts. For instance, it can be in the materials that we are using,

the components, the electronics and other parts that go inside the product. We are integrating the technologies to make the product more robust, sturdy and compact. As a matter of fact, one of the examples I can share is that of thermal management where we are integrating the mechanicals to develop and design products that can actually withstand the worst of conditions. Besides, we are also doing the technological development with respect to the optics.

Further, as you know, a sizable amount of resources are used in developing future technologies which are in the field of smart lighting. This is not limited to dimming or on & off, but striding more towards reading consumers' mind where a product through technology up-gradation can learn by itself and make it much easier for the user. A lot of work in that sphere is happening - locally as well as globally. At NTL, we are also working

towards offering a strong 'Smart Lighting' portfolio shortly.

Despite being so strong on all the fronts be it resources, technology, or strategy, why is NTL lagging in the country's lighting industry?

I would not say that we are lagging. We are just a little slower than the top brands in B2C. It's all about how you play on your strength and how do you want to evolve. Step one for us was to completely understand the LED lighting field, get the right perspective on the table, and then start working on it. This

was followed by technological advancements, which is a continuous process.

Also, our focus understandably shifted to government sales which happened at a very fast pace. We were amongst the foremost partners to Government initiatives through EESL, where we supplied over 1.5 million lamps. We, therefore, were a little slower in strengthening our distribution and retail network in 2015-16. This has now been changed and we are going to be all India brand by the year-end.

On the other hand, companies like Philips,

Bajaj, Havells, etc. have been in the B2C market for so very long. They have their resources as well as facilities in place. When compared with giants like these, we are still at a nascent stage but are learning to grow.

LED in lighting is equally new to almost all the players irrespective of their presence in the industry. Where did NTL get stuck?

NTL was a B2B company and focused on supplying CFLs and lighting electronics to the who's who of the industry. Transitioning to B2C for LED lighting was a big deal for us. Developing a brand and creating a distribution network takes time. As we began working on our brand in 2014-15, the Government went on a procurement overdrive for LEDs and our focus shifted to Government orders. The brand & retail aspect, eventually took a back seat. Since late 2016, we again started focusing on distribution channel and should have a national footprint shortly.

At NTL, how do you perceive smart lighting?

We developed the country's first LED bulb in 2009 that performed as per Indian conditions. This shows our research level and the kind of technology expertise that we have. We can make sure that the NTL's repertoire of LED products would be





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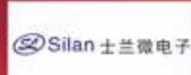
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perfectly suited for Indian conditions. A lot of advancements in smart lighting are already happening in terms of automation, dimming, mood behaviour, understanding consumers' need, connectivity with lights, etc. In this fray, smart cities project is one of the primary factors to make the smart technologies further viable, similar to what the government did in case of LEDs in the residential segment. Also there are customers, driven through technology, who are actually generating the demand for these kinds of products. The awareness is building up and soon people will start experiencing the change in lighting technology.

Anything smart that NTL is coming up with?

In terms of product development, we are coming up with completely integrated smart streetlights. The product development is continuously going on since last few months and we expect to roll out the same by the year-end. We believe that smartness of the products has to be viable - should be quality-driven and easily accessible. Our objective is to develop NTL's Pharox as the most trusted brand in the country's lighting arena.

How is NTL positioned in the Indian LED market?

Accessibility, affordability and quality - it's a combination of three parameters, with which we are pushing our brand Pharox.

We are very competitive in the market and our strategy is geared more towards projects - both government & private. We are also developing retail channel and are greatly involved at the regional level in local activities so that people who are associated with us start feeling our brand presence.

What according to you constitute quality?

There are three basic parts that constitute a quality-driven product i.e. electronics, optics (including LEDs), the mechanicals. We have been a leader in electronics. The kind of processes that we follow and the kind of validation equipment that we have in our R&D center, it is extremely rare for a product which is designed, developed and manufactured at NTL factory to fail in the market. All thanks to our stringent quality testing and validation processes. We actually abuse our products at the testing stage to come up with ones that can compete with the best in the industry.

How is NTL's manufacturing and marketing placed? Where is the potential coming from?

As of now, we have the capacity to produce 6 million pieces, majorly bulbs along with batons and downlighters. Of these, we are currently utilising only 80% keeping certain spare capacity to cater to the future generation of the need that we are looking at. We do have plans to include streetlights

and panel lights in our portfolio in a phased manner. For all these and many more, our strength is R&D. Every six months, we have something new for the market. Further, we keep a constant touch with architects and lighting designers to help ourselves design and develop future products aimed at catering to the needs of smart cities.

As far as marketing is concerned, by the end of this financial, we are looking to have 100 dealers/ distributors and 10,000 retail points. We are getting greater potential from north & west, while substantial amount of the revenue is also coming from south. For the year, we are targeting roughly around Rs. 600 crore of which 60% would be from retail.

What steps are you taking to promote NTL?

There are face to face interactions that is happening with the customers. There are seminars that we do at the customers' premises with their technical team, maintenance team, purchase team, trade team, etc. There, we educate them on the advantages of using LED lighting products over the conventional ones. Besides all this, a lot of emphasis these days are on e-advertising where a lot of communications from the organisations are going to customers outside in the form of mailers through which we are educating our customers especially on the benefits associated with LEDs.

