

Power Packed

Amila Singhvi shows the way with her Rs 100-cr printing and packaging company

IMAGINE you are a movie camera panning a conference room, the walls of which are lined on three sides with pictures and packets very much familiar to you. You pan from one end, past packets of Nestle, Cadbury, Dettol, Dabur, Haldiram among several other brands, covers of popular coffee table and travel books and magazines and then you move up front a bit to rest it on the profile of a person behind the processing, printing and packaging of all of the above mentioned items. You'd have amovie made.

For hers is a unique story in the world of printing. Way back in 1981 it required a lot of courage for a young woman with only a bachelor's degree in chemistry and law from Jodhpur to move out of the core competency of the business she was married into: advertising. Amila Singhvi didn't know much when she began, she admits. "But then I have always been tech-savvy and some backward integration helped me to begin the repro business. International Print-O-Pac or IPP as it is better known in the industry was thus born. "It did take some formal training. But the habit of always maintaining a system of checks and balances has kept us away from pitfalls and allowed us to become what could be the largest of its kind in the country," Amila reveals with some self-restraint.

The humility is not so oncoming from the way she is bedecked in matching sets of jewellery. But what shines more than anything else is the humble smile that precedes her answer to any question. When she reclines in her chair to narrate her journey towards building an almost Rs 100 crore empire all on her own, she has very little to say about herself, rather she chooses to say very little about herself. "With some help from my family of course," she would punctuate every statement of triumph from negotiating the nitty-gritty of the packaging industry which has very stringent demands on quality. It was in

1992 that she diversified into printing. And five years later IPP moved into packaging. Today, it is a leader in its chosen avenue.

These days she is often caught between giving up and stopping press.

But why, when IPP is now thinking of going international? They are thinking of starting operations in Sri Lanka and the West Asia. "We have identified couple of places in Sharjah where we can begin operations because we see a huge opportunity there," Amila elaborates. She is also thinking of increasing her exports to European and Asian countries. "Medical books outsourcing is one big area that needs to be explored," she says. "And we are able to send one container every three days. We can perhaps do more." And the most important news of all is IPP's idea of acquiring an American company in the next one year. "We have identified couple of outfits in the US too," she declares.

Yet, she says she still wonders when she can devote her full time to her other love: social service. From the way things stand the possibility seems unlikely in the near future. And if she does that it would be her 750-odd workforce who would miss her the most. They surely won't print her resignation.

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