

Drive More, Enjoy More

In a conversation with Dr Ravi Lalwani, Mangesh Shrinivasan, General Manager OEM & Aftermarket at Blaupunkt India shares customer interests for multimedia navigation devices, retail strategy, brand shops and promotion plans, etc.

Ravi: How do you see the car navigation market in India? In which cities you are getting good business?

Mangesh: Multimedia navigation has emerged as the biggest area of consumer interest in making a buying decision of a car, especially in urban areas of India. All major cities, metros and B-towns are rapidly expanding in area, hence in-car entertainment is essential in order to enjoy the experience of driving in heavy traffic as well as inter-city journeys on the highways. All these have increased consumer interest in multimedia navigation devices.

Where is the future growth market for car navigation devices in India? What will drive this growth?

India's network of national highways has been expanding and there has been upgradation in quality of driving experience. People are enjoying frequent inter-city, inter-state journeys along with family and friends. They are even moving into a new city, as they aspire to grow in their careers. This new age India requires easy navigation with voice guidance to ensure people reach their destination safely and on-time.

Do customers prefer multi-functional devices (maps + music + games etc.) or map specific devices only. Which are the most popular navigation models among your portfolio?

Yes, today consumers are smartphone savvy and expect similar features in the in-car audio system as well. New age mobile app integrated smartphone connectivity via USB, WiFi and Bluetooth are emerging as key areas of



Mangesh Shrinivasan finds that car multimedia navigation devices have become the biggest area of consumer interest

growth in this market. Blaupunkt has a comprehensive range to suit all car types and models. The key point in Blaupunkt is that the India range is the same as the global product line up which gives the Indian consumer latest global technology and features at a value-for-money price. Blaupunkt is leader in technology products and solutions in infotainment space, to several global automotive OEM brands.

How do the dealer channel, retail channel and online channels compare with each other?

We are growing in all areas and we

are creating a proactive retail strategy by putting in place a network of Blaupunkt brand shops, owned and operated by our channel partners. This will be first in automotive infotainment industry. The first brand shop is planned in Kochi this year, followed by several major cities like Bangalore, Chennai and Coimbatore.

Do you have tie-up with the automobile manufacturers, car dealerships for selling of your devices in their outlet?

We will be having our branded accessories in almost all OEMs in India, in the next 2 years.

What are your channel strategies to capture the Indian retail market?

India is having large geographic area with unique challenges. We are having route-to-market channel strategy to expand our retail presence in India. Also, we are having pronged approaches to establish strong distribution partners across major cities and small towns. We are focusing on providing proper guidance to car and accessories dealers.

Who are your major competitors in the market? What are your marketing strategies for big national brands like Map My India, Satguide, etc?

Competition landscape has evolved over the last 5 years and one can no longer make a 'apple to apple' comparison in this industry. Consumers have adopted smartphones and tablets for mainstream multimedia content storage and playback. This has changed consumer behavior and usage of in-car multimedia device. They are expecting easy integration of smartphone or tablet on aux mode, Wi-Fi,



Smart audio controls



Blaupunkt office in India



Car Navigation system & MP3 player

Bluetooth or via USB connection to the car head unit. Therefore, traditional analysis of competitors does not provide a comprehensive perspective of the emerging trends in car audio, navigation industry.

What kind of advertising and promotions have you done to build visibility for you brand?

We have over 26,000 fans on Facebook and are also using Twitter to promote the brand and engage consumers. We have signed up Ayushmann Khurrana as he shares similar brand aspirations - classy, young and great quality.

In this screen age you will be facing competition for other mediums like smartphones, laptop installed with the navigation software, apps, providing the same services. So what are your strategies to compete with them?

We have been inventors of car audio way back in 1932, since then we have achieved several milestones in innovations. This has made Blaupunkt into a trusted global brand today. We are leaders in conceptualizing new ways to make the in-car multimedia experience unique and userfriendly. For example, we are world's first to design a universal steering wheel blue tooth car kit (BT411), steering wheel remote (RC10), 8 programmable keys for 2DIN (San Diego 530) and 1DIN head units (Toronto BT).

We are expanding in all aspects of business by delivering exciting products in multimedia navigation globally as well as in India. As we are going strong form last 75 years it has given us a creative and clear vision combined with professional execution of the brand across many countries.

ravi@globalinfomart.com

WHAT OTHERS SAY:

"NNG's vision is that navigation will be a standard, even in entry-level cars. We currently deliver localized software solutions for 168 countries across the globe that run on a single navigation engine. The response received from the Indian market has been tremendous and NNG looks forward to consistently developing innovative and cost-effective navigation solutions to ensure smooth, congestion-free commuting."

- Peter Bolesza, Vice President - Emerging Markets, NNG

"There is no doubt the navigation market in India is growing briskly... with TomTom's global quality standards and processes we can change the current regional landscape."

- Jocelyn Vigieux, Managing Director, TomTom (India).

This is Our Life

Rajneesh Kapoor

