Tarantula's successful move to Southeast Asia

Leading site portfolio management software company's expansion into the region and the drivers of its success

Tarantula, the leading telecom site portfolio management software company, relocated its global head office to Singapore a year ago and is expanding its product offering in Southern and Southeast Asia. Thanks to its highly focused telecom infrastructure management products, Tarantula already provides its solutions to manage information relating to portfolios covering more than 400,000 telecom towers worldwide. This includes tower businesses of Indus Towers, Viom Networks and American Tower in Southern Asia. In this interview, Udhay Mathialagan, CEO of the company, tells us about Tarantula's successful first twelve months in the region.

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Udhay Mathialagan, Chairman and CEO, Tarantula

Read this article to learn:

- Tarantula's expansion into Southeast Asia
- Which countries are driving Tarantula's Asian operations
- Why towercos need to properly manage their data
- Tarantula's business in Africa versus Asia

TowerXchange: Udhay, could you give us a brief history of the company? Which countries are driving Tarantula's business in Asia? Who are your main clients?

Udhay Mathialagan, CEO, Tarantula: We commenced business in the UK in the late nineties by solving problems relating to site sharing and by creating an industry-wide data sharing platform. In 2004, we established our software development centre in Hyderabad, India. As India's local tower industry began to expand in 2007, we worked hard to became the go-to software platform for a number of India-based tower companies including Viom Networks and American Tower. In the following years we continued to grow our business in Europe.

Last year, we decided to establish our new head office in Singapore to get closer to the opportunities emerging across the Asia Pacific region and to bring together an international team of tower industry and software product experts. We currently have staff available in multiple locations in the region and have expanded our customer presence across multiple countries in the region, including Irrawaddy Green Towers in Myanmar and Komet Infra Nusantara in Indonesia. We have also commenced work for major Southeast Asian telcos across a number of their regional assets.

TowerXchange: Which countries do you feel are driving business for Tarantula?

Udhay Mathialagan, CEO, Tarantula: Myanmar is going through a rapid expansion phase with

multiple tower companies active and greenfield projects being developed. India, in contrast, has a well evolved tower market and represents opportunities for us to expand our offering as our customers focus on improving asset utilisation and management. Our offering is suited to both newly forming as well as mature markets and this is the interesting side of Asia for us as the region is host to very advanced as well as very young tower industries.

Although primarily working with towercos in Asia, we are now starting to bring to a new group of telcos the offerings we have in other regions into Asia where mobile operators are seeking to have a better understanding of their wireless assets. As Asian telcos seek to create options to spin-off their towers or to enter into new forms of sharing arrangements, they need to have a more comprehensive and detailed understanding of their towers. Tarantula has extensive experience in this process.

TowerXchange: What is the percentage of business that comes from MNOs compared to tower companies in the region?

Udhay Mathialagan, CEO, Tarantula: Internationally our business is split evenly between MNOs and tower companies. In Asia, it is more skewed towards tower companies rather than MNOs. However, as previously mentioned, this could change as MNOs are becoming an increasingly relevant client for us.

One of the underlying issues in the industry that drives our business is that the cost of wireless infrastructure keeps increasing – particularly the costs relating to passive infrastructure. It is very important for MNOs - and they are well aware of it now - that they find smarter models to manage the lifecycle costs of their passive and the property aspects of their wireless infrastructure.

MNOs with the intention to divest their portfolios can significantly improve their value by having high quality and well organised information on their portfolio of site assets. It is not unusual to see companies that have invested billions of dollars in their wireless infrastructure not having basic information around the property and physical utilisation aspect of these assets.

TowerXchange: Which specific challenges does Tarantula help address?

Udhay Mathialagan, CEO, Tarantula: We help asset owners improve the long-term economics of their business by automating business processes and

> " Some companies do try to manage their information without a single source of core data for example, by relying on department level data and consolidating them into spreadsheets. They sometimes even use this method for time-bound activities such as asset deployment projects but spreadsheets don't offer any meaningful capability to make connections and comparisons across projects or asset types "

by concentrating asset data in a "single version of the truth". We offer a data-hub for towercos to operate their end to end business in a seamless way. This "single version of asset data" connects with a number of other sub-systems covering downstream activities like remote sensors or energy management systems or higher-level business functions such as financial management. Importantly, our product helps tower operators track and implement the various aspects of customer and ground lease contracts ensuring revenue integrity.

TowerXchange: A lot of tower companies struggle to manage their data. Do you believe that there are circumstances when a data hub is not necessary for telecom tower companies?

Udhay Mathialagan, CEO, Tarantula: Some

companies do try to manage their information without a single source of core data for example, by relying on department level data and consolidating them into spreadsheets. They sometimes even use this method for time-bound activities such as asset deployment projects but spreadsheets don't offer any meaningful capability to make connections and comparisons across projects or asset types. The business misses out on a common core set of data that could have eliminated re-work. A strong argument for Tarantula's business proposition is that we enable them to consolidate all their asset data in our hub and help tower companies to reduce costs and revenue leakage.

In addition, some towercos aim to build scale by using distributed spreadsheets which won't support their growth beyond a certain point. Our platform offers significant payback in terms of revenue

realisation. In fact, Tarantula tracks revenue streams and growth potential while also helping companies to make better investment decisions.

TowerXchange: How do you compare the Asian market for Tarantula with Africa and other regions where you operate?

Udhay Mathialagan, CEO, Tarantula: We see some similarities between Africa and Asia such as patchy energy infrastructure and challenges in securing the required human talent and skills.

Asia is host to a very diverse array of countries, including some of the world's most and least developed nations. We have learned not to generalise and to focus on solving a specific market or customer problem using our products that have been tested in real-life conditions in more than thirteen countries.

TowerXchange: How would you judge the last 12 months of Tarantula, have they been successful?

Udhay Mathialagan, CEO, Tarantula: Over the past year, Tarantula has secured customer deals that cover seven new markets in the region so I'd definitely say establishing our base in Singapore and deploying resources in this region has been a good move.

I expect our business to continue growing as wireless penetration increases and new business models and ideas are deployed to manage the expected subscriber and data volume growth ■