

PRODUCTS THAT CARE FOR NATURE

PUNEET GUPTA is an Instrumentation and Control Engineering graduate, who has also studied management at IIM Calcutta and the University of Texas.

He is an innovator, whose startup, Clensta, is a true example of how innovation can deliver state-of-the-art technology for hygiene. Clensta has already achieved some milestones by introducing 'waterless technology'-based products that have been able to save nearly six million litres of water in a short span of time. "We are aware of the dire need for hygiene and healthcare and certainly PM Narendra Modi, through his Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan, is making huge endeavours towards the drive," says Gupta. "Our initiative strives to achieve the PM's mission of swachh (clean) and swastha (healthy) Bharat by 2019..." he says. Gupta is this year's winner of the BW Businessworld Young Entrepreneur Award.

PUNEET GUPTA

CATEGORY: 0-3 YEARS

Clensta International





The idea behind the startup

It was part of my job to work in close association with the Armed Forces for eight years and I was lucky enough to meet brave soldiers on duty at remote locations like Siachen, Kargil and Drass. This personal experience of meeting Indian soldiers and witnessing the privation faced by them, propelled me to develop waterless products, which led to the birth of Clensta. After extensive discussions with experts I realised that directly or indirectly, the availability of water or the physical conditions of an individual become the primary reasons why people sometimes lack access to something as basic as personal hygiene. And that's how the idea of establishing Clensta came to me – as a way of making personal hygiene accessible to everyone.

Personally I believe, passion is a prerequisite to starting a business and is also a huge motivator because through your startup, you fuel your passion. The journey of an entrepreneur is of a creator / builder. You produce stuff to succeed and to know that the produced stuff is creating a value, is a great feeling. It is extremely motivating to know that you have created something, which has further created value for others. Here, it is the value added to the life of brave soldiers, patients on the bed, an elderly person, a backpacker, a traveller or each of us when on the go – these products would make personal hygiene accessible for each one of us.

The USP

Clensta as a brand, had been established to provide innovative solutions to everyday problems. Keeping one eye on the future, the company aims to develop environment-compassionate products which contribute to a better world. Through its waterless technology-based products, Clensta helps save 350 litres of water with a 100 ml bottle and has already achieved milestones by saving nearly six million litres of water in a short span of time.

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Any shampoo or body bath in the market can provide personal hygiene. However, when residing in a location with water challenges or with no water at all, the other product cannot serve the purpose of personal hygiene but the proposed product can. They can be used anywhere, at any time.

These waterless body baths and products are distinguished from others, based on their formulation and innovativeness. The relative amount of ingredients and the ratio (weight/volume %) of every ingredient and its synergism makes our product different from normal shampoos. Due to this combination, the products are able to maintain the same level of cleansing effect without leaving the same high level of residue, which can hence be wiped with a towel or tissue without having to use water.

Additionally, our product has low aquatic and soil toxicity, strong biodegradability with a lower rate of bioaccumulation. Furthermore, we have prepared our product using ingredients that will break down in nature with a high rate of acceptable concentrations, so that unacceptable concentrations of a surfactant or its metabolism, are not generated in the environment.

Business model

Our revenue model is driven by sales of these waterless products. We follow a B2B sales channel, wherein the product is sold via a distribution network. In terms of a distribution channel, we have a well-connected distribution network in place that works closely towards making our product available to various market segments and other market areas, resolving issues related to maintaining hygiene. To reach customers, we are building online shopping channels, through various e-commerce portals.

Although we do not have any other company working in the exact same market with the exact same product, at the end of the day the product is a personal hygiene product. Any company dealing in soaps, body wash, sanitisers, shampoos

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or dry shampoos can be considered an indirect competitor. A very large segment of FMCG market leaders would eventually become competition, given the fact that we are bringing in products or substitutes for all these products.

The way forward

The rise in environment concerns during the past ten or 20 years is terrifying. At these rates, the world is, and would soon be, looking at a crisis. Our aim is to provide the world with a new and different vision of bringing environment compassionate products/services, working around global challenges and concerns. With the current product line, we address the need of personal hygiene and water conservation and are working toward developing other products as well.

Overseas foray

Yes. Expanding our international footprint is definitely on the cards. We have already set up global operations with a subsidiary in The Netherlands, and are either already in discussion or exploring business opportunities in Africa, Asia, the European Union, North America and South America.

Social touch

In terms of social impact, waterless personal hygiene can help increase the level of personal hygiene at various levels in society, which would eventually help lower risks of diseases and infections caused by lack of hygiene. On the other hand, the products would reduce our per capita water usage to a very huge level. A 100 ml bottle of Clensta product will help save as much as 350 litres of water.

With more people becoming aware of environment changes, people are changing their ideology and lifestyle towards more environment-friendly products. Clensta aims to join the journey via its products.

The paradigm shift

The business landscape is rapidly changing. Many businesses now realise that their customers increasingly demand environmental responsibility and sustainable use of natural resources, seeing green business as good business. Clensta is constantly involved in developing innovative products that cater to the needs of the future and works toward a clean and green planet.

Idea of wealth generation

As far as the Indian ecosystem is concerned; the target market is worth Rs 11,000 crore. Considering the importance of the product, the market would increase multiple-fold across the globe. The market area is huge, which includes defence, hospitals, adventure enthusiasts and travellers, space, OTC and Home Care available on a domestic and international scale. Our business is scaled from the aspect of B2B as well as B2C.

Self-realisation

We have come a long way and we have a long way ahead of us, but with every milestone achieved, it does feel big. Within a year of commercialisation, the company grew at a rate of 4X and targets to increase it to 10X. We have made it in the market with big customers like the Indian Army, the CRPF, AIIMS, SSKM, C. K. Birla, a South Africa project and so on. Our successful association with Moon Village makes us the second Indian company to be associated with it.

Currently, I am a startup entrepreneur, and the stage passed by and yet to come, brings in a lot to learn further. Ten years from now would definitely be a stage where I have learnt a lot. Yet, there is no end destination to it. It is a constantly changing and challenging journey that involves making the company bigger and better while giving back more to the world.

Message to entrepreneurs

It is the job of a good leader and outstanding entrepreneur to foresee any sort of pitfall and implement constant change and innovation time and time again, making yourself a disruptor.

Dare to dream moment

Passion coupled with the ability to dig deep and adapt, is a prerequisite of the leap from an idea to a successful business. It wasn't until I travelled, explored, met people, and was blown away by the impact of an innovation that I could alter lives. My personal experiences of meeting Indian soldiers and witnessing the privation faced by them catapulted me to develop a solution – 'Clensta'. 

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