

Sukanya Shriram: The 'Cool' Lady Entrepreneur!

Written by Valsala Menon



Disciplined, determined and with a confident aura about her, that spells Sukanya Shriram for you. Welcoming us into her plush office at Porur, she launched into sharing with Small Enterprise India, the story of her success.

Hailing from Madurai, Sukanya is a graduate in Chemistry. She got married to Shriram, who is into the business of manufacturing air conditioners. His, was the only air conditioner that procured certification as being of brand quality.

Way back in the nineties, there were not many brands in India pertaining to air conditioners and his endeavor was even encouraged by public sector banks. “Shriram had his own manufacturing unit at Pondicherry, which was a tax free zone .There were no service centers for air conditioners in those days. It was on my father in law’s suggestion that I decided to start an air conditioner service center.” – Smiles Sukanya.

She took up on his suggestion and set up a small office at home and also employed a few boys to assist her. While her husband manufactured air conditioners, Sukanya serviced them. Thus was the inception of her firm Technocrat Engineers.

“I used to sit at a small office at home and co-ordinate calls and messages on pagers. For all the air conditioners sold by my husband, I used to undertake the servicing and maintenance work. Since I did not have much capital, I used to take advance payments for the entire year, for annual maintenance contracts. That used to take care of the salaries and later on , the rent .”
Sukanya affirms.

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Slowly but steadily her business picked up and she rented a place to provide in house servicing for air conditioners. “Even though I am not a technical person, I learnt the tricks of the trade. I learnt to identify the trouble shooters in air conditioners.” Finally, Sukanya was able to handle clients single handedly. She undertook annual maintenance contracts for the air conditioners sold by her husband as well as for those who bought their air conditioners else where , but who required annual maintenance, once the guarantee period expired. It was virtually an upward spiral for her, with lots more clients seeking her services-servicing for corporate, upcoming companies, the Income tax offices, and so on.

Apart from servicing for split a/c, and window air conditioners, Sukanya decided to branch out to servicing of ductable air conditioners . She was dealing with different brands now- Azure too, for instance. “ We were not getting enough support from Azure, even though I had taken up distribution for the whole of Tamil Nadu. Of late, there are a lot of air conditioners being manufactured in China, where it is a cottage industry. They get dumped here in India under different brand names, and they do not work well at all”- opines Sukanya.

Apart from service and maintenance of air conditioners, Sukanya has now ventured into the dealership of Daikin air conditioners, Japan, which is now a leading brand in terms of quality and ranked number two in the world. She handles sale and maintenance of domestic air conditioners, inverters, ductables and splits.

“Initially I used to buy and sell from Daikin, but based on our performance, now they have offered me dealership. Panasonic too has given me dealership. When I started out I couldn't afford to employ even a clerical staff but now I enjoy a turn over of close to one crore per year. I owe my success to my family and their loving support. “- smiles Sukanya.

She has been in business since 1995.Sukanya has eight employees to assist her at Technocrat Engineers . She also undertakes to train boys who come from vocational institutes. After training they can either join her firm or leave. She provides accommodation for the employees, and they are insured too.

Sukanya is a dedicated and committed entrepreneur , who aspires to think big. Nowadays the entire world is focused on energy saving and I want to promote , and sell good brands of air conditioners that help in conserving energy”. Way to go, Ma'am!