

Cool quotient

● THE COMPANY IS ONE OF THE LARGEST MANUFACTURERS OF AIR COOLERS IN THE WORLD



Achal Bakeri

LEADING Indian air-cooler manufacturer Symphony has been present in the Gulf market for the past 20 years. "We launched our products initially in Dubai and over the years spread across to other parts of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)," says Achal Bakeri, Chairman and Managing Director, Symphony Ltd.

Looking at the huge potential in the region, the Ahmedabad-based company recently opened a branch office in Sharjah. It also plans to open a warehouse in the region. "The Gulf is a major market for us," says Bakeri. "We are present in nearly 20 countries in the MENA region. In fact, some of the traders even export our products to Afghanistan and central Asia."

Symphony began manufacturing residential air coolers and sold them across India and other parts of the world. Today, it is one of the largest manufacturers of air coolers in the world. About five years ago, it acquired a US-based company, which had operations in Mexico. "It was the world's first air cooler manufacturer, established in 1929," says Bakeri. "After the acquisition we are now into commercial and industrial air-coolers as well."

Air coolers, which unlike air-conditioners do not have compressors, use evaporative cooling technology. "In hot and dry regions such as the Gulf and Africa, it makes sense to use evaporative cooling, which cools a home and even provides much-needed humidity," he adds.

Other advantages that air-coolers have over air-conditioners are that they are portable, can be taken outdoors and consume very little electricity. "The recurring cost is 90 to 95 per cent less than that of air-conditioners," explains Bakeri. Symphony, which operates a government of India-recognised R&D centre, has over the years made its coolers more efficient.

The company, with a turnover of \$65 million, exports its products virtually across the world including Africa, Europe, the Americas (other than Canada) and Southeast Asia. "We even have an office in Moscow," says Bakeri.

In India, the market for air-coolers is expanding rapidly, despite growth in the air-conditioning business.

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