



THE LEGENDS OF GEOSPATIAL INDUSTRY

A GEOSPATIAL MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS INITIATIVE

Hall of Fame.



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HEN IT COMES TO choosing a career path, India has a long tradition of following the family practise. It is pretty common to see a doctor's son taking up medicine or a chartered accountant's daughter joining her father's firm. So, when the son of the

Dean of the city's medical college and the grandson of the state's most prominent physician decided to break the family tradition, quite a few eyebrows were raised.

No, it wasn't that Kamal K Singh was a rebel. He was just fortunate enough to have a mother who refused to push her child into taking the conventional route to success. "My mother said: I have seen your grandfather minting money. He made tremendous name for himself, but he had no time for himself or family. Your grandfather left everything he owned to your father and that money is helping us to support you. Otherwise in his own salary today, we can't afford to spend ₹1,000 a month for the education which you are getting. So my advise is, do something different," recalls Singh, who then went on to pursue mechanical engineering.

But, even as he was studying to be an engineer, Singh had decided to take the untrodden path. "I was probably 17 when I decided I will do my own business," he says. "I was a

ROLLING IN THE DEEP

topper throughout my college days, but I never gave a single campus interview."

It wasn't long before Harvard University Business School beckoned Singh to earn a Master of Business Administration degree along with a hefty scholarship. With a few months to kill before the course was to begin, Singh set up a steel rolling mill on the behest of a family friend. When the time came for school to begin, Singh had to choose between the life of an executive in the United States and his dream of setting-up his own business.

The first-generation entrepreneur chose well when he decided to stay back in India. Because taking that humble

Chairman's Statement

We are at a critical point in history. Thanks to the pace of the Internet, and the explosion of mobile communications, everything we know is undergoing dramatic change. Change, in fact, is no longer something to which we have to adapt, it's now the environment in which we live.

At Rolta, we have undergone a transformation that will be regarded as one of the most significant ones. It was in 2000, we began a process of reorganisation and restructuring with leading consultants and our main focus was to create a leaner, more efficient and more profitable organisation. The outcome was a strategy to combine our business into a model that was Services oriented, as an IT-led one.

Today, we have transformed all our businesses by adding IP - Computerised Engineering, Enterprise IT, and Enterprise Security, and all much stronger value due to this transformation. For example, the Computerised Engineering is much more business as we are now able to capture requirements at both, the engineering studios that are built around services for data creation as well as the developed markets, which require IP for data analysis, while in the Engineering domain, we have opened up much larger markets, due to our ability to now very well address the OEM requirements of various plants, through our reliable and successful engineering solutions, in addition to our traditional services offering for OEM products.

But the largest transformation that has happened is in our Enterprise IT business, where we have built truly robust capabilities at the front end as North America, low market access, enabling and differentiating our value chain through technologies like, Real Time Business Analytics, Big Data, Cloud, Mobile, Business Intelligence, Enterprise Performance Management and Software Defined Infrastructure. We have done this by acquiring companies that give us a much needed cross time domain, cross industry, cross sector, cross industry, highly qualified personnel, key IP and access to new markets - especially in the high growth segments of Banking, Financial Services, Insurance, Retail, Healthcare and Manufacturing. These companies were already successful in the US using their excellent resources, which we have since supplemented with a solid offshore capability.

Today, when one looks at each of these businesses on a standalone basis - there are all very exceptional, especially due to this transformation. It is because our ability to combine these businesses with each other, and across sectors and IP and service industries, several times over gives us a very strong competitive edge.

This combination has allowed Rolta to build a solid Enterprise and Security business. Today, we are one of the very few



In the past one year alone, we have won very significant multi-million dollar contracts with a variety of leading customers, across technological IP industries, where we have been able to combine our Computerised Engineering and IT capabilities.

For example, Microsoft Lights On Water, USA chose Rolta for a US\$ 10 Million project, due to our ability to provide end-to-end business transformation to Microsoft around integrating business a CRM Solution by leveraging the combination of Rolta's Computerised Engineering and IT capabilities.

Similarly, another order, Northern Power Grid, UK, (a British-Hydroelectric company) has awarded contracts of over US\$ 10 million to Rolta, for delivering a solution that offers advantage of Rolta's Computerised Engineering and IT capabilities.

and The Dow Chemical Company. We are executing a multi-million dollar contract from India to implement a comprehensive Engineering Solution, by seamlessly combining our Engineering and IT expertise.

As we have transformed our offerings stack to an IP-led one, we have maintained our ability to take these offerings to world markets. For example, we today have a game-changing partnership with SAP that allows us to take advantage of their sales organisation and customer base. We are one of the very few selected strategic global partners of SAP, who can leverage SAP's worldwide sales engine to provide their customers with state-of-the-art Business Analytics and Big Data solutions by exploiting the power of SAP technology bundled with Rolta IP through our extensive and high-value solutions. It is a truly one-to-one, as well as a multi-to-one.

Milestones: Power On A Gas, Petrochemicals, Building Financial Services a business, Retail, Manufacturing a Healthcare.

Our journey of transformation has been robust. It has taken time, significant investments, and yet been without any major setbacks. But we end with two very powerful - we today have a most robust business model, which is built up primarily through sales of Rolta IP-based solutions, rather than being primarily only on services. We have thus been able to successfully monetise our investments for this transformation - through increased margins, higher revenues, enhanced and sustained customer retention. We expect to continue providing stable and consistent growth in the coming years.



Rolta today is a world leader in its field, thanks to Singh's leadership and vision

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*One thing Singh
had was unflinching
support of his wife...
who stood by him
through thick and thin*



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*A happy family life
has been a core inner
strength for Singh*



Rolta borrows initials from my grandfather, mother and father's names. I always wanted a name which is very easy to pronounce; is not a tongue-twister and can be accepted internationally

steel works plant to the heights of high technology. Singh has led from the front the four-decade-long transformation of one of India's most iconic companies – Rolta India.

At that time, though, Singh's father wasn't too pleased with this decision. So, Singh took refuge in his mother's positive affirmations and his wife's unflinching support. "My wife always understood my decision; she has given me much-needed strength."

A few years down the line, Singh learnt that steel wasn't strong enough to build him a business empire. The cyclical nature of the business meant that whatever Singh earned in 2-3 years would go into sustaining the business for the next couple of years. Singh sold off the company, but not the firm's name. "Rolta borrows initials from my grandfather, mother and father's names. I always wanted a name which is very easy to pronounce; is not a tongue twister and can be accepted internationally."

In 1982, Rolta started as data-processing company. "Technology is something I was very passionate about. In late '70s, to buy IBM 1401 and start putting into steel plant and using it for the various MIS and other things was unheard of, and I was doing that. And that is where I went. I started an IT company. Within a year



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Singh being
felicitated by Atal
Bihari Vajpayee,
Former Prime Minister
of India, with the
National Export Award

I was probably 17 when I decided I will do my own business. I was a topper throughout my college days, but I never gave a single campus interview

we were doing software development, we were providing packages. And within two years we were doing all kinds of turnkey services," Singh recollects.

DID YOU KNOW?
KK SINGH GAVE
UP STUDYING IN
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
BUSINESS SCHOOL
TO BECOME AN
ENTREPRENEUR

Not that this business came without a set of challenges. In those days, IT was a taboo. It was supposed to be taking jobs away. "Our competition in those days was also TCS. They were the big daddy of the business. I used to get jitters thinking if they decided to cut down their price, what will we do?"

So, to dispel the competition and add value to his business, Singh again started brainstorming. "Advanced countries like America and Europe were utilizing CAD/CAM/GIS, but



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Singh is a regular
speaker at top
conferences



*Singh being
felicitated by Dr APJ
Abdul Kalam, 11th
President of India,
with the Geospatial
Entrepreneurship
Award*



*Singh being honored
with the Lifetime
Achievement Award
by Hamid Ansari,
Vice President of India*

these technologies were nowhere to be found in India." So, Rolta became the first company to introduce GIS solutions in India in 1985.

What followed was a huge contract. "Our first customer was the Survey of India. We gave them a customized Digital GIS system worth \$10 million in those days, with complete support coming from us and our exclusive partners, like Intergraph."



At GeoSmart India 2016: Inaugurating the 'India Industry Report'

Even as orders flowed in, Rolta realized the government was not catching up in policy. The restrictive license raj regime was on the verge of spelling a death knell for the nascent industry. Something had to be done.

Since the whole process of importing hardware and software was taking 2-3 years, Rolta decided to build engineering workstations in India in 1989. The company set up assembly plants, imported components and tied-up with Intergraph technology and software at a huge cost of millions of dollars. That one decision transformed the company's success rate. One of the first customers for indigenous systems was the state-owned telecommunications service provider in the metro cities of Mumbai and New Delhi MTNL.

DID YOU KNOW?
ROLTA STARTED OFF AS A STEEL ROLLING MILL COMPANY

"Everywhere we went and our systems got welcomed with open arms. We captured 70-80% of the market in those 3-4 years. That's how we became kind of a market leader. The engineering workstations which we produced were also used for engineering plant design, and we captured 85% of that market," he explains.

However, the man soon realized he was missing the woods for the trees. "In my own passion for CAD/CAM/GIS, I neglected IT. We had just won our first large contract of

Sometimes, I feel that I am a first-class labor. Working and slogging morning to night. I still work 70-80 hours a week. But, I feel fulfilled and satisfied, and that's all that matters.



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With Bentley Systems
CEO Greg Bentley



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With Hexagon CEO
Ola Rollen



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With Trimble CEO
Steve Berglund

\$30 million for doing the complete digital mapping of Saudi Arabia. At that time, GE approached us, and I didn't give it the kind of attention that I should have," Singh sighs.

Rolta hastily entered IT setting up an internet service provider business in Mumbai, but it lagged behind the competition for years. "Even by 2005, my IT revenue was not even 10% of what our other revenues were. We were too late."

A major transformation came in early 2000 period when Rolta decided to change from a software service provider to an engineering and procurement or EPC firm. By 2005, Rolta was designing end-to-end large petrochemical plants in strategic joint venture with big names like Shaw. Singh also engineered the company's expansion in the defense sector, by providing state-of-the-art GIS based C4 ISR systems to the Indian Army. And then, between 2008 and 2015, Rolta decided to fully transform its business from a service-centric model to an IP-led model.

DID YOU KNOW?
ROLTA WAS THE FIRST COMPANY TO INTRODUCE CAD/CAM/GIS IN INDIA

But, this business transformations had come with a lot of pain points. "The only way was to acquire a lot of companies worldwide. For that I needed lot of investment. In the process, we spent over a billion dollars. Our market capitalization went down. From 'no debt', we became 'high debt'."

The sacrifice proved worthwhile as the company started getting well recognized for in-house developed IP-led Geospatial, Engineering and IT solutions worldwide. Rolta also leaped forward in the field of Digital IT Products including Big Data Analytics and Defence. And now, Rolta is playing a substantial part in what he calls the fourth industrial revolution

Over a span of 40 years, Singh has made Rolta a global name. And his secret is nothing but hard work. "In my mind, I would never retire," he says. "Sometimes, I feel that I am a first-class labor. Working and slogging morning to night. I still work 70-80 hours a week. But, I feel satisfied." And that's all that matters. 🌐