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Shikhar Aggarwal

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Business without Boundaries



When Diwakar Aggarwal, the Founder of BLS International established the company in 2005, his sole aim was to get BLS acknowledged as the leader in the provision of government to citizen (G2C) services. After the initial years of success when the company needed a push to announce itself loud and clear across the industry, it was his son **Shikhar Aggarwal** who stood tall in taking up this challenge in 2014, and since then has been setting new benchmarks globally in their domain of expertise. **TravelBiz Monitor** recognises Shikhar for establishing himself as a buoyant predecessor and expanding the business operations of BLS.

Up Close & Personal

Hobbies: Reading autobiographies

Favourite sports: Golf and Squash

.....**Anurag Tiwari**

IN 2014, when Shikhar Aggarwal took over the mantle of BLS International from his father, he realised that it was going to be a tough journey. The company, which having started handsomely in 2005-06 was on the verge of losing existing clients without getting any new accounts, it was a perform or perish situation if not acted immediately. A young 24-year-old sacrificed his Chartered Accountancy career and with the undying spirit went all guns blazing towards giving BLS International a new kickstart.

Before joining his father's business, Aggarwal worked as an intern for Grant Thornton LLP, an Accounting company, for around two years. It was here where he learned how a big multinational firm works and how their business grows. He worked on to incorporate the same in BLS.

When he joined, BLS had no other alternative, but to approach new clients and avail new contracts. After a struggle of almost two years, Aggarwal along with his team, managed to get along few big projects on board which helped BLS strengthen its ground again after some shaky times. One such project was awarded by the Spanish Government in December 2016 to set up and operate Visa Application Centres on their behalf in 55 countries.

In 2016, BLS International expanded its business operations from visa outsourcing to provide front-end and citizen services to the State Governments in India to facilitate the realisation of the goal of transparent and accountable E-Governance. It won the Punjab E-Governance project same year in which it set up over 2,000 seva kendras across the state of Punjab. In the last 12 years, BLS International has grown to service 36 client governments in 61 countries through 2,325 global centres in the provision of outsourced visa and passport, front end and citizen, consular and passport, verification and

attestation, and E-Visa services.

"We started operations in 2005 and till date we have processed around 18 million applications, consisting of various types of applications in visa processing, consular services, recruitment of specialised cadres and attestation services. BLS International today is the world's largest Indian specialist service provider for outsourcing of visa, passport, consular, attestation and citizen services to the governments and diplomatic missions globally. Our numbers speak our journey. Success didn't come over night for us," stated Aggarwal.

In 2016, BLS became the only company in its domain to be listed on the National Stock Exchange and the Bombay Stock Exchange. Apart from Indian state governments, it explored other governments globally for citizen/front end Services and won a USD-5 -million contract from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in UAE for 5 gulf countries; UAE, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain and Kuwait.

Shikhar has been the face of BLS International in the last 3-4 years and the responsibility rests on his shoulders for company's expansion on global markets through numerous associations and tenders across Asia, Africa, Europe, South America, North America and the Middle East markets.

From pre-travel information processes, data processing and biometrics capture of applicants to acceptance of crucial travel documents, BLS over the years has been playing a role of the catalyst in making travelling easy. Going forward, Shikhar aims to focus on technology-based innovations and cut down the traditional hassles of delivering the services prevalent over the years. "We have been honest in our business approach and have always prevented our selves from doing false commitments. This industry is only 30% outsourced so I feel there's an endless scope of expansion. There's huge potential lined up ahead and I hope we can take BLS International to new heights on global front," he concluded. ♦