



# Increasing security and profits

This Mumbai-based e-surveillance startup is helping businesses make their premises more secure.

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**W**hen Sunil R. Udupa decided to establish an e-surveillance business, there was little by way of positive feedback to encourage him. From equipment vendors and potential clients to friends and 'experts', everybody doled out the same advice: India is not a ripe market for online surveillance. Others who had attempted and failed were cited. However, Udupa was confident. He went ahead and founded Securens Systems in December 2011. "I was not new to launching things," says the 51-year-old, who served as director at HMA Data Systems, credited with introducing ATMs in India. Udupa's aim was to develop a reliable and economical technology-based surveillance solution that could prevent crime. His bet paid off. Today, Securens counts ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Axis Bank, State Bank of India and Punjab National Bank, among others, as its clients.

Udupa founded Securens with the help of his long-time friend Srinivas Popuri. He put in ₹90 lakh and Popuri ₹10 lakh to kickstart the venture. The money went into R&D, product development, product testing, software development and building the initial infrastructure. "Within a year, we had a solution that was not only more efficient, reliable and credible than anything in the market, but also one that brought down the security



Sunil R. Udupa, Founder and CMD, Securens Systems, at a staff meeting.

costs, incurred on hiring guards, to a fifth," says Udupa. Securens's technology integrates online alarm systems with on-site closed-circuit television cameras and a two-way audio system to deter crime on a real-time basis. When a sensor is tripped at the site, a siren is activated and an alert is sent online to the company's monitoring centre. The officers at Securens then conduct video verification. If the threat is not real, the siren is switched off from a central location. If a crime is being committed, the officers use the audio system to dissuade criminals and

alert the local police station.

The company, which offers e-surveillance as a service, charges its clients a monthly fee that ranges between ₹4,500 and ₹10,000, and includes supplying equipment, installation and maintenance, and round-the-clock monitoring of sites. Till date, it has helped prevent more than 250 burglaries.

The service was initially developed for e-surveillance of ATMs but, over time, it has evolved to take care of the security needs of various businesses. The company is now expanding operations to monitor school

buses, retail outlets, food commissaries and cooperative housing societies.

Overcoming technology challenges, such as slow Internet connections, was key to the company's success. "We solved this by developing a low bandwidth application that could run on 2G and 3G bands. This has enabled us to put our systems in places with poor connectivity, not limiting us to urban centres alone," says Udupa.

Securens, which has a presence across the country and employs 550 people, has seen a sharp rise in revenue. From ₹4.5 crore in 2012-13, its topline grew to ₹47 crore in 2014-15. Venture capital firm Mayfield also pumped in over ₹46 crore in the business in two rounds of funding in 2012 and 2014. This has helped the company look at inorganic growth as well.

Recently, it made a successful bid for the e-surveillance business of Nelco, a Tata Group company. Securens is planning further acquisitions this year. The startup has also begun global operations. Earlier this month, it partnered with an Indonesian company to offer services to one of the largest banks in the country, BCA Bank. It is also looking to explore the Chinese market. Udupa has positively proven the naysayers wrong.



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