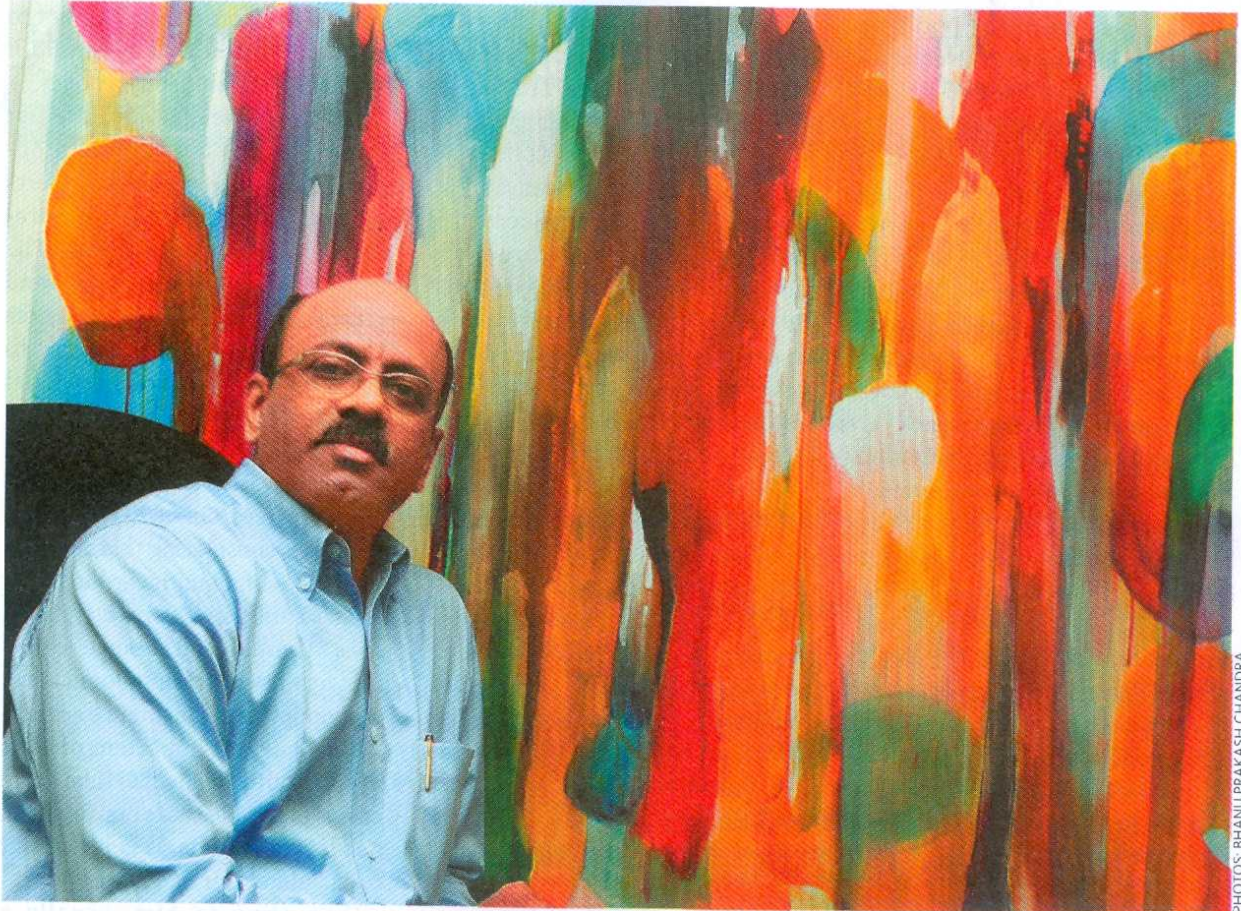


## wealthcreator



PHOTOS: BHANU PRAKASH CHANDRA

# Future calling

**SUBASH MENON HAS A THREE-PRONGED STRATEGY TO TAKE SUBEX TO THE TOP OF THE TELECOM SOFTWARE LEAGUE**

By Abhinav Singh

**T**he ambition to excel as an entrepreneur made Subash Menon quit his electrical engineering job and form Subex. What began as a one-man show with an investment of ₹20,000 in Bangalore in 1992 has grown into one of the largest telecom software product companies in India. Today, Subex, which started with a small system integrator, has products specialising in telecom fraud management and revenue assurance solutions.

“I took a loan from my previous employers to fund the venture,” says Menon. “We generated funds when we went in for an IPO in 1999. Most venture capitalists were not inter-

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Date: 07-02-2011 | Edition: National | Page: 30 | Source: Abhinav Singh | Clip size (cm): W: 17 H: 24

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**Going strong:** Subex office in Bangalore; (left) Subash Menon, CEO of Subex

ested in funding a venture aimed at software products as the risk was very high. But the IPO generated a good response and there was no looking back.”

From 2000, Subex began looking at the international market as well. The first destination was Africa, which, like India, was an emerging market. “I saw a lot of potential in the telecom fraud prevention space,” says Menon.

Subex’s first Indian customer was Hutch. The company gradually spread its wings and set up branches in the US, Canada, the UK, Singapore and Australia. Today, Subex’s customers include 36 of the world’s 72 biggest telecommunication service providers, including Bell, Sprint, T-Mobile, Telefonica, Verizon, Saudi Telecom Company, Swisscom, Telecom Egypt, BSNL, Reliance Communications, StarHub, Telekom Malaysia and Telstra.

Headquartered in Bangalore, Subex has more than 300 installations in 70 countries, with offices in Denver, Dubai, Ipswich, London, Ontario, Ottawa, Singapore and Sydney. There are over 1,200 employees. Besides being listed

## Strategic growth

Some of the acquisitions by Subex:

- ★ April 2007—Syndesis Limited, service fulfilment company
- ★ June 2006—Azure Solutions, revenue assurance company
- ★ October 2004—Lightbridge Incorporated, fraud management business assets
- ★ October 2004—Alcatel Fraud Management Group, fraud management business assets

Subex’s stock price in the NSE and the BSE as on January 28—₹63.95 and ₹64.70 per share, respectively

on the National and Bombay Stock Exchanges, its Global Depository Receipts (GDRs) and Foreign Currency Convertible Bonds (FCCBs) are listed on the London Stock Exchange.

Menon’s strategy has kept the company going strong. He has regularly kept an eye on international firms. “We kept acquiring companies and also kept releasing newer versions of our products from time to time,” he says. The latest acquisition, in 2007, was Syndesis, a Canadian firm. This was one of the largest overseas acquisitions by an Indian company in the software space back then.

Under Menon’s leadership, Subex

pioneered the Revenue Operations Center (ROC) platform—a centralised approach that sustains profitable growth and financial health through coordinated operational control. It broadly presents a telecom company with a holistic picture of their network and helps to identify problems. Subex then helps the company fix those issues.

Menon is looking forward to steering Subex towards further growth. “Innovation is our key strength and we will keep focusing on that in order to tap the changing trends in the telecom market,” he says. “We have been working on a three-pronged strategy—problem, solution and delivery.”

Subex will continue to focus on ROC and managed services. The ROC platform provides the telecom companies with a long-term vision for the evolution of higher margin and better customer service and ensures that their investments are future-proofed. Subex Managed Services help companies stay focused on their core operations while transferring the non-core activities to Subex. “This model of engagement results in a deep relationship between our customer and us,” says Menon. He is currently not looking at further acquisitions as he feels that it is time to focus on innovation and conceptualisation. The company expects a revenue of around \$110 million by the end of the financial year 2010-11.

When he is not busy with Subex, Menon likes reading history books and biographies. He also enjoys travelling with his family, particularly to off-beat places. Menon’s dream is to see Subex as one of the top three companies in the global telecom software products space, the largest Indian software product company and a well-respected corporate. ●