

FACE TO FACE



Fortinet gives full credit for its global success to the company's strong channel base and considers it the foundation for establishing a good business. Vishak Raman, country manager, Fortinet discusses it further with **Anusha S.**

about the available technologies and their works. Recently, we took part in Bangalore IT.com event, which I think will act as a platform to reach the targeted audience.

Another challenge that we face is to meet our customers' expectations. Customer satisfaction is important for us and as our partners play a vital role in reaching the end-users we are always in touch with our channel partners so that they give out 100 percent service to the customers whenever required.

Please elaborate on the present stand of Fortinet in the country?

Globally, Fortinet is the leader in unified threat management. In India, the company has captured more than 49 percent of the market share. We are the only manufacturer featured in all the segments ranging from small market to mass market. We have been recognized among the top three in all individual segments. Fortinet has a good market in IT, ITeS, manufacturing and telecom-

munications in the country.

What are the challenges Fortinet faces in the current market scenario?

The present market is still not aware of the advanced technology. Thus, first of all we need to create awareness, which involves building communication with the business people, and taking part in public awareness programs.

Due to the frequent changes in technology, it becomes necessary that we educate the community

How does the company plan to increase market share in India?

In India, we presently have five people for sales and support. We have our offices situated at Bangalore, Mumbai and Delhi and are looking forward to Chennai, where we are coming up with a new office very soon.

We are very focused on what we do and want to do justice to our business and to our customers. We have always done our busi-

ness through channels as the company believes that good channel partners lead to good business and hence are planning for selective channel expansion in the country to grow the business.

We might not be so well known as a company in India but as far as our services are concerned we are counted in the top 10 security companies in the country.

Who are Fortinet's distributors and channel partners?

Presently, we have Ingram Micro, as our distributor. We have been very fortunate in terms of business with them. We believe even Ingram is very happy working with us as we give exclusive business to the distributor. We have about 20 channel partners in India, including national level partners and tier-two channel partners addressing regional channel partners.

What is the criteria you look for while selecting a channel partner?

Channel partners act as a backbone for any IT manufacturers' business, thus we are very careful and conduct intensive research before signing up any one as our channel partner.

We choose the channel partners depending on their experience in the present market scenario as well as their knowledge and understanding of the market. Every new channel partner firstly has to submit a business plan to the compa-

ny. We study it, then we have a demo on the same and only then the partner gets certified by Fortinet with internal sales training. This process takes about 1-2 months in all.

Does Fortinet have its own support team or does the company rely on channel partners to provide sales support for Fortinet?

We don't have a separate support team, it's the channel that takes up

role in reaching these training programs all over their channel.

Please elaborate more on Fortinet's partner program?

The main aim of Fortinet's partner program is to build a global network of quality distributors and resellers who are committed to the equivalent objective as the company.

Fortinet believes in providing world-class products, service and support to its customers and so

Focus Is On Channel Expansion

the support work for the company and is entirely responsible for it. Partners are entirely responsible to the end users but Fortinet is always there for partners in case they need any kind of support.

We take up lot of promotional programs like channel incentive program and other programs to encourage channel partners.

This, in turn, helps partners to do their business well. Ingram has a product manager who takes up the responsibility of all the promotional schemes and plays the vital

also should the channel partners.

What are the future plans of the manufacturer?

We are focusing on expanding our channel base. We are coming up with new strategies and schemes that will enable our partners to do more business for us.

We are concentrating on the loopholes and are hoping that we do come up with effective plans that will enable Fortinet to be the best company where the Indian market is concerned. ←