

Founder Interview: Assemblage Entertainment

Deepak

Growing rapidly while maintaining a high standard in creativity is a tough task for anyone - that is exactly what Assemblage Entertainment is out to achieve as they build an international brand in full-service 3D animation and development studio.

Looking at the highly successful team behind Assemblage, what was the background that led to everyone coming together and starting the venture?

Assemblage, as the name suggests, was incorporated as a culmination of some talented and successful people coming together in order to partner with each other and create a truly world-class animation production studio.

The team comprises of several award-winning artists, technologists, and production pipeline managers etc. who are not only passionate about their roles but are also highly driven to create some high-end work for a global clientele.

Our solid network and sound relationships with production and distribution houses internationally was a catalyst to start this venture and produce some high quality work with them.

Why do you think the Indian animation industry is still visibly behind countries like the US?

The animation industry, not only in India, but in many other countries, is still competing and coping with the US standards. There are several reasons for this.

The US has not only mastered the creative and technological production processes but also the art of storytelling. Together with a thriving domestic market, they have possibly been the most successful market for animation. Indian audiences at large are still evolving as consumers of animation content. While we're still trying to create our own local content/IPs, which is encouraging, we also need to improve our storytelling techniques which could appeal to both Indian and global sensibilities.

Apart from a domestic market, another reason why the industry is still coping with the west is largely economy driven. Animation, like many other industries, is a new age business. Investments into this business, both from an economic, regulatory or non-fiscal point of view, have been second to the more traditional and classical industries, and rightly so. However, we're seeing growing government participation and increasing attention into the AVGC sector. With such policy frameworks in place, incentivizing studios to participate more actively in the sector will lead to phenomenal growth in the years to come.

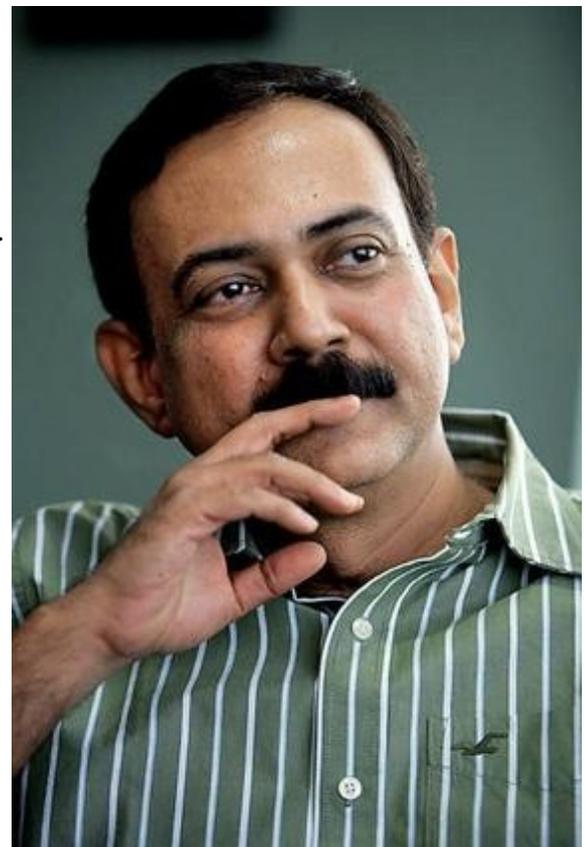
With the right regulatory environment and growth of centers of excellence, which would focus on not only on R&D but also skilling the artistic talent in the country, India has an important role to play on the global stage.

What goes into hiring and managing artistic talent? And on the same note, what learning did you see while growing at such a fast pace?

There is always a challenge to manage and nurture creative talent, but that's the nature of this business, sometimes more passion than profession. Artists, animators and technologists require the right environment, working culture, quality of work and aspirational projects to be kept motivated. That is precisely what we're trying to create. Hiring, managing and retaining artistic talent is one of our main focuses given ours is a very people and skills heavy industry – human talent is as important as the technology.

In about 18 months, we've grown into a studio of about 300 people. While this growth has been phenomenal, it has come with its own challenges. Having the relevant domain experts in each of the verticals in the creative process is essential. Animation, like other creative forms, is a collaborative effort and having the right people at the right time doing the right work is necessary for making the production pipeline as efficient as possible.

Creating the required balance between art, technology and process is what we're constantly aspiring to do.



A K Madhavan, CEO -Assemblage Entertainment Pvt Ltd

Can you share some interesting projects that your company is working on or planning?

The production floor currently is buzzing with several projects. “Blinky Bill” – a full-length feature film by Flying Bark distributed by Studio 100, and Swan Princess 6 & 7 DTH DVDs by Sony Pictures among others.

Blinky Bill is expected to release in September 2015 in Australia/New Zealand and Europe, followed by a global release.

Assemblage is solely responsible for the CGI in building the asset and shot production of the entire animated features.

This is remarkably noteworthy given the short time span in which the studio has gone to win and work on global film productions in an intensely competitive CGI market space in India.

Outside of entertainment, Assemblage is also exploring opportunities in the space of education, medical sciences etc.

What is your one tip for aspiring entrepreneurs?

As an entrepreneur at 55, I have realized that it’s never too late to begin! As long as you have the drive to work hard and face the challenges and an unwavering conviction in your self – being an entrepreneur is rewarding.