Interview: Vishal Thakker & Sunny Bhatia â?? Co-Founders and Managing Partners, Antonov Industrial Parks, India

> â??Our approach is to ensure that the entire complex is managed around the clock, providing our clients with seamless operations that allow them to entirely focus on their core business.â?•

11.04.2018

Tags:

India, Antonov Industrial Parks, Warehousing, Logistics, Service Provider

Vishal Thakker and

Sunny Bhatia, co-founders and managing partners at Antonov Industrial Parks, provides insights into the unique offering of this ambitious and upcoming industrial development company, which offers highly equipped advanced industrial and warehousing solutions to pharmaceutical companies across Indiaâ??s most strategic hubs.

Could you introduce Antonov Industrial Parks to our international readers?

VISHAL THAKKER (VT): We are one of the upcoming warehousing and real estate companies in India, with the objective of catering to all the main industrial sectors operating in the country, from leading e-retailers and FMCG companies to thriving pharmaceutical organizations. Antonovâ??s approach is to provide these fast-growing companies with fully-gated industrial complexes, where Antonov moreover develops industrial storage solutions as well as indispensable amenities, such as business centers, hotels for senior staff and cafeterias for truck drivers. All Antonovâ??s industrial parks are plugged onto a 24/7 power back up system, which ensures that our customersâ?? processes are spared any disruptions. Overall, our approach is to ensure that the entire complex is managed around the clock, providing our clients with seamless operations that allow them to entirely focus on their core business.

Despite our countryâ??s huge and ever-growing demand for integrated industrial parks, India still suffers from obvious shortcomings when it comes to meeting customersâ?? expectations, as there are only very few companies offering lands, industrial parks, facilities, and related services through a one-stop-shop partner. In this context, Antonov Industrial Parksâ?? ambition is to meet this demand by bringing a completely new concept to the Indian market.

Although many pharmaceutical companies are interested in settling or expanding their operations in India, they apparently experience critical difficulties in fulfilling this objective. What are the main issues at stake?

SUNNY BHATIA (SB): The first and foremost difficulty they face relates to land acquisition. One should not forget that India stands as the seventh-largest country in the world â?? with a total area of over 3.2 million sq.km, and it also holds various economic and manufacturing hubs beside the countryâ??s capital New Delhi. This specificity renders land prospection activities particularly time-consuming and difficult. In the meantime, one has to take into account that such a vast territory comes with a great variety of climates and geographies, which must be taken into account when setting up a substantial industrial and manufacturing footprint.

Furthermore, India is a federal union comprising twenty-nine states and seven union territories, which all follow different regulations and processes when it comes to land land acquisition. As you can imagine, acquiring a given land requires dealing with an overwhelming number of stakeholders at the city, state, and union levels â?? with no guarantee for the company to eventually receive all required authorizations to acquire the coveted land. This is evermore true in particularly dense and sought-after industrial areas, such as the Metropolitan Area of Mumbai, which is Indiaâ??s economic and industrial capital.

Overall, the acquisition of large parcels of lands reveals itself a particularly tricky and challenging endeavor for all companies â?? and even more for multinational companies with no existing footprint in the country. Fortunately for these ambitious companies, land acquisition is also one of Antonovâ??s areas of expertise, which we can leverage to offer end-to-end solutions to any companies and investors interested in setting up their operations in Indiaâ??s premium industrial locations.

[Featured_in]

Could you provide insights into Antonovâ??s first flagship industrial park in the Mumbai area, which is now waiting to welcome pharmaceutical companies?

SD: This industrial park of 100 acres of land holds a development potential of over five million sq.ft, and it proudly emerges as one of the largest industrial parks currently available in the Maharashtra state. It is strategically located in Bhiwandi, in the outskirts of Mumbai, in proximity to current industrial and warehousing facilities of large corporations. In terms of connectivity, it reaches out to the Mumbai-Nasik Highway and is at the core of Indiaâ??s most strategic industrial corridors â?? the so-called DMIC (Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor) and NMIC (Nagpur-Mumbai Industrial Corridor).

VT: Building on the ongoing development of this first park, we are already considering replicating this approach all around the country, including strategic hubs such as Pune *[which is also located in the state of Maharashtra, at around a four-hour drive from Mumbai â?? Ed.],* as well as in Hyderabad and Bangalore â?? among many other premium locations. We are moreover in the process of acquiring lands in Ahmedabad, the economic and industrial capital of Gujarat, a strategic state which accounts for over 40 percent of all Indiaâ??s pharmaceutical exports. Overall, Antonov is about to gather together over 200 acres of land scattered across Indiaâ?? most strategic cities, and these upcoming parks will soon be ready to welcome pharmaceutical companies.

Although Antonov is an expert in land acquisition, we are not a mere land trading company â?? far from that. In terms of development, we can build manufacturing sheds â?? a field where we hold a long-standing experience through prior work experiences â?? according to our customersâ?? requirements, so they can start installing their machines as swiftly as possible.

In the grand scheme of things, our companyâ??s added value goes beyond providing lands to our customers: we aim to develop, build, and manage these industrial parks on their behalf, and we therefore set up a dedicated asset management team towards this objective. In this regard, Antonovâ??s offering truly stands as a paradigm changer in India, where most companies just content themselves with providing lands to companies before leaving them with the responsibility to manage and bear the cost of managing these assets. As per Antonov, we are truly partnering with our customers throughout the entire journey and aim to position ourselves as a true one-stop-shop industrial developer.

The pharmaceutical industry is one of the main sectors targeted by Antonov Industrial Parks â?? what can you offer to these companies?

[related_story]

VT: As mentioned, we truly emerge as an industrial development company, which is able to handle the design, development, land acquisition, monitoring and management of industrial projects. This offering â?? which is still rather unique in India â?? stands as a great facilitator to all pharmaceutical

companies aiming to set up an industrial capacity in the country, especially for international players that are new to India.
As much as the pharmaceutical sector is concerned, we have three different options to offer them. First, we can obviously develop storage and warehousing facilities in our parks, which are ideally located to service the entire Indian market and easily export products to the world. Second, we could turn our industrial parks into manufacturing hubs for pharmaceutical companies, while the third opportunity at hand would be to turn our industrial complexes into fully-fledged pharmaceutical clusters.
Although India has evolved into one of the largest producers of medicines in the world, there is no dedicated cluster in the country that gathers together manufacturers, service providers, and other pharma- related organizations. In this regard, we plan to engage with various industry and trade associations across the country and evaluate how we could move this project forward.
SB: Although we are still a young company, we already hold all required resources â??whether it comes to engineering and real estate expertise or financial resources â?? to develop, execute, deliver, and manage the best industrial parks on behalf of pharmaceutical companies.
What would be your final message to our international pharmaceutical executives interested in developing their companiesâ?? footprints in India?
VT: India holds one of the fastest growing pharmaceutical industries and markets in the world, while our country has developed a true manufacturing expertise, which makes it a destination of choice for pharmaceutical investments. Antonov Industrial Parks wants to actively contribute to the growth of the countryâ??s pharmaceutical sector by offering our services to both local and international pharmaceutical companies. We welcome all new and existing companies that want to deepen their activities in India, and we are ready to jointly write new success stories for Indiaâ??s pharmaceutical sector.

See more interviews