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By Mike Knowles

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Fruitbox: How to make the right connections



Tarun Arora talks explains how the Indian importer IG is entering its sixth decade with a new push into ecommerce

Tarun Arora, director of Mumbai-based importer IG International, is certain that establishing the right kind of logistic network over the past five decades has enabled the company to achieve "outstanding" growth in a market as enormous and daunting as India.

In terms of its geographical size, India is a market very much on a par with Europe. Add to this a comparative lack of reliable infrastructure for perishable goods and it's clear that the subcontinent is a hugely challenging arena in which to sell and distribute products.

As IG marks its 50th anniversary in what must be one of its most challenging years to date, Arora speaks to Chris White in the latest episode of Fruitnet's interview series Fruitbox, and explained how India's liberalisation of fresh produce imports has led to a dramatic change in the business.

"In the last twenty years, because of the consumption increase in imported fresh

produce, that has given us an outstanding performance as an organisation," he reflects.

As one of the only companies in India to invest in cold chain and logistics to distribute imported products around the country, IG is now present in 27 different cities across India and acts as a major conduit for the entry of key products such as apples, kiwifruit, citrus, avocados, cherries, stonefruit, berries and exotics.

The company recently announced it had harvested its first ever crop of locally grown blueberries earlier in the year, a development which reflects increased demand in the Indian market for fresh berries.

In terms of capitalising on that kind of future growth, Arora says, having a closer connection to consumers will be an advantage for anyone hoping to sell more fresh fruit and vegetables in India.

"The thing I see in terms of how the Indian market is evolving is the

emergence of ecommerce. All of these positive comments that we have been seeing are primarily because we are more closely connected to the consumer now than ever."

To capitalise on that growth, IG is launching a new app in the coming months that will offer consumers and companies direct access to imported and local produce. "Ecommerce is what will take India forward, even in fresh produce, because people want contactless delivery," Arora adds.

Hosted by Chris White in London, Fruitbox now attracts a big audience across the global fruit and vegetable business that tunes in twice a week to hear exclusive interviews and expert analysis.

Produced by Fruitnet Media International, the show is essential listening for everyone in the fresh produce industry.

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