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Top India consultancy sets up Singapore joint venture Apex-Avalon eyes upper-mid tier firms needing advice

BY MALMINDERJIT SINGH
msingh@sph.com.sg

ONE of India's largest management consultancies, Avalon Consulting, has set up shop here.

In its first foray outside India, it has chosen to team up with an experienced hand in breaking into the Singapore and regional markets - Girija Pande, the former Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) Asia-Pacific chairman and now executive chairman of his own company, Apex Advisors.

Mr Pande assumes the position of executive chairman of Apex-Avalon Consulting, a 50-50 joint venture. This is to be a Singapore company, which will venture across Asia advising its clients in areas such as commercial business plans, including mergers & acquisitions, he told The Business Times. Although India is not traditionally associated with management consulting, he said that there is no reason why Apex-Avalon cannot make its mark: "I have always said that in the services industry, India should do well because of the advantages it has in the talent pool and the number of people who speak English. The IT industry showcased India's talent pool and its ability to go global and succeed."

Avalon is no greenhorn to management consulting; it has a 25-year track record in India, where it has more than 1,450 employees and clients among multi-national corporations. Vault, a global entity which collects feedback on consultancies, ranked Avalon among the top 10 Asia-Pacific strategy-consulting firms last year. It was the only Asian firm on the list.

Mr Pande, explaining the motivation behind setting up in Singapore, said that the high rate of economic growth and proliferation of trade agreements in Asia will create opportunities for Asian companies to invest in each other over the next five years.

"There will be opportunities to find partners (here). I believe Singapore will always be the hub for Indian, Chinese and Asean companies moving into each other's economies. That is why we set up here."

The company's strength lies in the targeted advice it can give due to its small size; Mr Pande suggested that upper-mid tier companies looking for focused advice might find Avalon a better fit than a larger outfit. In the region, Apex-Avalon will be looking to work with clients in manufacturing, logistics services, consumer products, retail services and agro-chemical producers, for example.

The firm will initially focus on Asean, particularly Indonesia and China.

Hermes Info

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MSINGH

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