

Google helps Indian technology distributor reach hundreds of rural villages



About Essmart

- essmart-global.com
- Bangalore
- We bring the world's essential technologies to every local shop
- 42 employees
- Launched in August, 2012



Essmart supplies essential, smart technologies to poor families and businesses in rural parts of India via a trusted network of “kirana” mom-and-pop stores. It all started with a pilot scheme in Pollachi, Tamil Nadu state, South India, which was an instant success. A range of products including flashlights, electric bikes and solar street lamps, sold out in an amazing four days. To date, Essmart has sold over 6,500 products with the potential to transform the fortunes of a family or a business, in an area spanning 45,000 square kilometers and more than 750 villages. In doing so, it has changed the lives of at least 22,000 people in just two years.

The Internet is a vital part of Essmart’s business. All of its customer accounts are on the cloud. The team communicates mostly through Hangouts, and uses it for the weekly team call. Every employee in the field has a smartphone with a customized Android app to report back on store inventories. The Internet has also been instrumental in enabling Essmart to grow from one distribution center to six. When a store places an order using the Android app or by phone, the product is delivered to them within a couple of days.

Essmart is having a real social impact. Storekeepers can earn between 8,000–9,000 rupees a month selling items like solar lanterns, water filters and cooking stoves. This is a 20 percent increase on what they were earning before. Essmart products also help businesses in many different ways. A barber shop will be able to stay open for longer because it uses solar lanterns, for instance. For Prashanth Venkataramana, Director and Head of Operations, the future is bright. “We want to reach the whole of South India,” he says, “and we want to be the go-to company if anyone invents a product for rural India.”

“We want to be the go-to company if anyone invents a product for rural India.”
**— Prashanth Venkataramana,
 Director and Head of
 Operations, Essmart**