



# On Fleek

From a small operation offering basic data connectivity and cabling in the early nineties, Trends & Technologies Inc. has evolved into one of the Philippines' premier systems integrators, tailoring solutions for multiple markets. Keen to spread its wings, the company has transformed to provide technology-enabled business services and is looking at international expansion.

**HASAN FARD**  
CHAIRMAN AND CEO  
Trends & Technologies Inc.

**H**asan Fard is one of Trends' original eight founders who launched the company in 1992. Today, the technology-enabled business services provider employs 900 people and has seven offices spread across the Philippines, Vietnam, and Cambodia.

"Fortunately, we were able to turn a profit in year one," Hasan says in reflection, "and we have been a profitable company consistently, for all 29 years since then."

The secret to this, he explains, lies in our core values where we place our trust and faith in God together with our wholesale commitment to the shared journey. Trends was always a venture with an eye on the future, meaning the easy pit-fall of short-term gain, long term-loss was avoided instinctively.

"We have always taken a prudent attitude; at the beginning, all eight founders re-invested whatever we earned," he explains. "We had a vision, and it was always in our minds where we wanted to be 10, 20, or even 30 years ahead. It made no sense to take money out of the company while it was still developing."

It was a vision that proved prescient in the extreme. Trends was founded just as humanity stood on the cusp of the biggest shift in social and economic behaviour since the Industrial Revolution. It is sometimes difficult to →



remember today, in our world of 24/7 connectivity, but as the nineties began, information technology and digitisation were still considered non-essential extravagances in many industries. The internet had not yet been popularised and mobile phones were both scarce and basic. All that was to change over the years to come and companies like Trends soon found themselves riding the wave of the digital boom.

Hasan says: “When the internet started to emerge in the mid-nineties, we knew it would change the whole landscape of technology and from the beginning, we wanted to be a big part of that.”

**Customer-focused**

It was important, however, to Hasan and his colleagues that the company was not seen as “another bunch of tech geeks obsessing over gadgetry.” From its earliest days, Trends was customer-focused and commercially driven. “This is very important for us,” the chairman and CEO says, “we had to be able to bring technologies which enable organisations to become more successful in their business. It was as simple as that. The tech revolution was not about tech for the sake of it and we approached it like that from the start.”

The clarity of this focus has enabled Trends

to become a trusted partner across multiple sectors. Operating with the slogan, “Technology to Transcend,” the company has provided offerings for companies spanning industries such as telcos, contact centres, pharmaceutical, media, manufacturing, education, healthcare, financial services, and a range of business clients.

“The key thing is that we are outcome-based. Yes, we provide technology, but that technology is going to change. It always does.” Hasan says. “But the outcome the customer is looking for is not so fickle. So, we provided value-added services. This is what our business is based around, and this is why, even now, 70-75% of our revenue comes from existing customers.”

This wide-ranging technology platform has enabled the company’s flexibility and adaptability, meaning Trends effectively acts as a bridge. Its customers are on one side, their technology partners on the other, and both are equally important to the business model. This positioning has reaped impressive dividends and resulted in Trends being listed 61st in the Philippines’ top 100 companies list of 2019-2020.

A big part of this ongoing success is centred around people. From the outset, the company

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**During the pandemic we were able to support our customers remotely**

has invested heavily in making sure it hires and trains top engineers and other essential staff. Such is the positivity in Trends’ business culture that many of its original recruits remain, a fact of which Hasan is clearly proud: “We have staff who have worked with us for 26 or 27 years. That tells you something about how Trends works. Our staff have grown with us.”

**COVID management**

However, like the rest of the corporate world, Trends’ seemingly inexorable progress was stymied, to some degree, by the arrival of the coronavirus pandemic. In common with most countries

worldwide, the Philippines has rotated in and out of lockdown measures several times. Indeed, the Philippine Government has introduced some of the most stringent restrictions in the world to help curb the pandemic. Nonetheless, Trends managed to mitigate the worst of the effects.

“When the first lockdown was announced in March 2020, we came up with a policy,” Hasan explains. “Everybody had to work from home, from day one. As a technology company we were perhaps better positioned to implement this than those in other sectors. Even before Covid, we issued company laptops to every engineer. We always invested in laptops rather than desktops, for reasons of power, flexibility, and neatness. This approach enabled large parts of our work to continue, despite restrictions.”

The company also increased data plans on employee mobile phones whenever necessary to enable complete connectivity throughout lockdowns.

“In this way,” Hasan says, “we were able to support our customers remotely.” This was especially important for Trends’ customers – like hospitals, power companies, and telcos – who had to remain operational; since they provided essential

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products and services to the Filipino people.

Trends maintained an essential skeleton crew at its head office in Makati City located in Trafalgar Plaza with some out-of-the-box thinking.

“We converted the twelfth floor of the building, which was 1000 square metres, into a bedspace,” Hasan explains. “This allowed key employees to remain in the office, under strict compliance with the regulations of the Department of Health.”

**People power**

This enabled Trends to sustain a strong footing throughout the pandemic. It also meant the company was able to avoid redundancies or

shortening the working week, as has been the case elsewhere.

“All of our employees received a hundred percent of their salary every day. We also raised their commission and create a fund for families of employees who were facing financial difficulties because of the pandemic. In the Philippines, we know this saying, ‘That you only know who your best friends are in the most difficult times.’ This is how we like to conduct ourselves at Trends.”

“I would never, ever talk about the success of Trends, without the great people we have working with us. Our employees are by far our biggest and most valuable asset,” Hasan says.

In the near future, Trends intends to continue its upward trajectory by focusing on secure hybrid cloud solutions, payment gateways, and analytics, just to name a few. Through these three areas of focus, the company looks forward to the next three to five years with well-grounded optimism. Hasan puts it like this, “Any organisation desires growth, of course, but for us growth comes from the ethos. How can we make our customer more successful? This is the question we are always asking. This is what drives us, in everything we do.”