Ailton de Assis Queiroga

Compsis

“ I saw an opportunity to improve traffic flow and toll collection. ”

COUNTRY	Brazil
INDUSTRY	Technology
EMPLOYEES	132
YEAR SELECTED	2004
WEBSITE	www.compsis.com.br/

COMPANY SNAPSHOT

Brazil hasn't always been known for high-tech innovation, but Compsis aims to change that. Based in São José dos Campos (an aerospace center that is the home of Embraer), the 23-year-old firm develops and integrates hardware and software solutions for various industries, including the automobile and aerospace sectors. It is best known for helping highway and urban traffic authorities ramp up their toll collection and improve traffic flow efficiency without needing to invest in new infrastructure. The company has already implemented its systems in Argentina, Ecuador, Egypt, Australia, and India and is shooting to extend its reputation globally to show the world what Brazil's high-tech innovations are made of.

Founder Ailton de Assis Queiroga hails from Pombal, a northern town in one of Brazil's poorest states. Trained as an electronics engineer, he received his Master in Electronics from NUFFIC (Netherlands organization for international cooperation in higher education), in Eindhoven, Holland. Ailton then spent eight years working for Embraer, the fourth-largest commercial aircraft manufacturer in the world. At Embraer, he eyed a niche for in-flight systems designed for the Brazilian Air Force. He and a partner, Hélio Ikedo, founded Compsis in 1989 with the mission of supplying these systems for the Brazilian government. Ailton quickly learned, however, that the government was an unstable market and decided to change his focus. Where could Compsis' technological expertise best be applied? The automobile and traffic management industries seemed the perfect fit.

Though Compsis installed its first project – a highway toll auditing system – in 1991, the firm experienced its first major boom in 1996 when Brazil began privatizing its highways. Sudden and fierce competition from major players – including Tyco, Telvent and CS Route – spurred Compsis to fight for territory on Brazilian roadways (the country boasts the globe's greatest mileage of concession-managed toll roads) by upgrading and optimizing its technology. Within four years Compsis had succeeded and had propelled its systems beyond Brazil's borders and into Australia and India.

A second catalytic event for Compsis came in 2002 when it won a bid to install the VLP (Veiculo Leve sobre Pneus" or "Wheeled Light Vehicle) project for São Paulo City. The bid granted the company reign in providing the city with fully-integrated traffic management systems. At the same time, Compsis had established its automobile testing systems as those with one of the highest operational efficiencies in the global market. The company has been able to innovate and grow thanks to several unique situations: (i) it finances R&D through partnerships with regional academic institutions; (ii) it continues to develop some of its products for government aerospace programs, using these opportunities to test some of the frontier technologies that it then incorporates into all its solutions; and (iii) Compsis provides its clients with world-class technology at bargain-basement prices, maintaining low costs by hiring local labor and buddying with universities in its R&D efforts.

A forward-thinking, cutting-edge firm like Compsis could have an extremely positive impact on public opinion regarding Brazil's self-image, helping to eliminate the country's so-called inferiority complex vis à vis technology. Compsis also has the ability to pursuade international clients and investors to take risks on other Brazilian companies by demonstrating that Brazil can deliver top-notch technology.

ENDEAVOR AND COMPSIS

Endeavor has helped Ailton with growth and commercial strategy, along with several present negotiations. Through the G-Lab program, Ailton received market analysis and guidance on international expansion; he also participated in the eMBA and PEG programs, and attended an Entrepreneur Summit. Endeavor also helped him develop strategic partnerships with key industry players, helped to change to a new business model and service-oriented company, and assisted with the optimization of organizational structure and culture.