

Brunei Darussalam

Making Connections in Brunei

Following the liberalization of the economy and rapid growth, DataStream Technology Group developed a set of brands and services that quickly propelled the company to become the leading telecommunication and broadcasting enterprise in Brunei. With easy to remember trademarks and brand names protected by the IP system, the company employs hundreds of people and maintains a continually growing IP portfolio.

Background

When Brunei Darussalam (Brunei) began liberalizing its economy and experiencing growth in the 1990s, a number of companies blossomed in the country. One such enterprise that took advantage of the new optimism is DataStream Technology Group (DST Group) – a conglomerate of nine companies that provide telecommunication and broadcasting services.



DST Sdn Bhd's logo (WIPO Pub WIPO-ASEAN/IP/BKK/06/DRAFT)

Branding is Key

Owned by DST Communications *Sendirian Berhad* (Sdn Bhd, an incorporated enterprise), the DST Group expanded rapidly following its foundation in 1995 and developed a number of services, products and brands – including *Incomm*, *Astro*, *KFM*, *Prima*, *Easi*, and *FasCom* – across several industries such as radio, television (TV), telephony, merchant banking, and Internet services.

In addition to developing its services, products, and brands, the conglomerate has relied on a robust commercialization strategy – supported by intellectual property (IP) assets – which has enhanced its corporate identity and ensured customer loyalty. As a result of its development, the DST Group has become one of the most successful enterprises in Brunei.

IP in Action

IP rights such as trademarks have been at the core of the DST Group's success, ensuring the company's brands are easy to distinguish in a competitive global marketplace. While the company initially relied on a single brand in the development of the group's trademarks – DST – in order to differentiate itself, the conglomerate soon realized that broadening its IP assets portfolio would increase the group's competitiveness.

Variety – the Spice of Success

Within the telephony sector, for instance, the DST Group commercializes personal phone and cellphone services branded as Easi and Prima. Both brands are commercialized under the management of DST Communication Sdn Bhd, a DST Group company, and have been registered as trademarks in Brunei. Not only are Easi (a pre-paid service) and Prima (a post-paid service) enhancing the DST Group's brand image; the services also form part of the conglomerate's pricing strategy, allowing customers to choose products according to their budget.



DST Group offers many services from its headquarters (WIPO Pub WIPO-ASEAN/IP/BKK/06/DRAFT)

The DST Group's telephony service caters for the home, small and medium sized enterprises, large companies, and call centers. The conglomerate's telecommunications products and services also cover a wide range of platforms such as cellphones, tablet computers, video conferencing equipment, and phone booths – the latter is managed by DST Payphone Sdn Bhd, also a part of DST Group.

In addition to telephony, in 1999 the DST Group launched a line of radio products for two-way computer-controlled communication called *FasCom*, a trademarked brand. In 2014, the stylish and modern radio was available in three models with nationwide coverage divided into four price plans – bronze (a budget plan), silver and gold (mid-range plans), and platinum (a premium plan). *FasCom* is managed by DST Technical Services Sdn Bhd – a DST Group member.

Commensurate with its brand of radio and telephone services, the conglomerate manages high bandwidth Internet access services (pre-paid, post-paid, or mobile broadband) via the *Simpur* brand – which is also a registered trademark in the country. The service comes with full customer on-site support and necessary equipment such as routers. Managed by DST Multimedia Sdn Bhd, a DST Group company, the *Simpur* brand has helped establish an online foothold for the conglomerate.

In order to enter the broadcasting industry, the DST Group partnered with Kristal-Astro Sdn Bhd, a joint venture between two Malaysian TV networks that provide multi-channel, pay-TV service provider in Brunei. With this collaboration, the company's brand has gained access to homes across the country over 100 satellite channels. Not only are the DST Group's brands available on TV; such is the strength of the company's portfolio that it also rules the radio waves of Brunei – via a partnership with Kristal Media, Sdn Bhd, the country's only private commercial radio station. The other members of the DST Group include entities such as Integrated Communication Sdn Bhd (Incomm), a cellphone operator and retailer, and DataStream Solutions Sdn Bhd, a multimedia company.

Customer Loyalty

With its variety of products, services and partnerships, the DST Group has ensured a streamlined commercialization strategy and provided customers a one-stop-shop for

all its services via flagship stores. Indeed, the company's branches ensure a hassle-free consumer experience including registration and billing for the DST Group's wide range of brands. The conglomerate has also enhanced customer loyalty via its own store cards – the DST Card and the D*Card. The DST Card is a debit or credit card allowing customers to enjoy merchant bank services. The card also allows members to receive discount travel vouchers for flights to a number of holiday destinations managed by partner airlines and hospitality companies.

The D*Card, meanwhile, is a customer loyalty card that allows users to enjoy several benefits including exclusive promotions run by the conglomerate as well as discount offers from companies – such as restaurants and cafes – that have partnered with DST Group members. The DST Group does not only protect its corporate identity within retail outlets and on TV and radio; the conglomerate also ensures its reputation online. For this, the conglomerate has relied on domain name registrations including a website for the DST Group (dst-group.com), DST Sdn Bhd (dss.com.bn), and Incomm (incomm.com.bn).

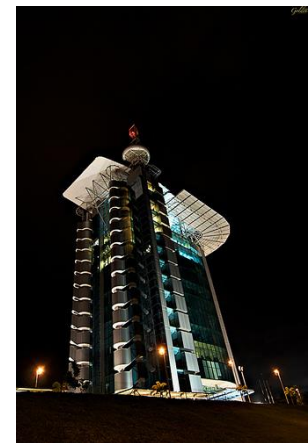
Having established a robust IP asset portfolio, The DST Group continues to fortify its brand protection strategies while implementing lessons learnt from disputes related to IP. For example, on one occasion another entity objected to an application to register one of the conglomerate's trademarks. The DST Group, however, thoroughly defended its trademark application and the concerned party eventually withdrew their complaint.

Going Forward

Rigorously promoting its IP and creating exciting brands and products for a number of industries, the DST Group has over 1,000 licensed vendors for the Easi brand and 250 for the Simpura brand. The conglomerate has also entered retail and distribution agreements with major multinational corporations such as Nokia and the Samsung Group. Furthermore, the group strives to continually develop easy to remember trademarks and brand names, protected by the IP system, to differentiate its multiple services.

Leaving a Landmark

With over 700 employees on its payroll, the DST Group is one of Brunei's most successful private enterprises with market dominance as a network operator and a service and entertainment provider. Based in Brunei's capital of Bandar Seri Begawan, the conglomerate's headquarters – a landmark commonly referred to as the "DST tower" – is testament to the enterprise's ambitions: embodying modernity while aiming for the skies.



(The "DST Tower," a landmark in Brunei and symbol of the conglomerate's ambitions; Photo: Hj Mohd Rosanno Hj Omar Ali)