



Some journeys are driven by opportunity. Some by ambition. And some are born from legacy, responsibility, and a promise to give back. **PALM Expo Magazine** sits down with **Akshay Shah**, Chairman and Managing Director of **CKS Acoustics Pvt. Ltd.** for an exclusive look at the work behind one of Make in India's newest successes. Detailing the foundation, challenges and the way forward.

BUILDING INNOVATION ROOTED IN BHARAT WITH CKS ACOUSTICS

Where the CKS Story Began

Where **Akshay Shah** built the factory to realise his father's dream. "In 2019, after the unfortunate passing of my father, late **Chandrakant Shah**, life presented me with a defining moment. My father was fondly known as "**CKS**" among friends and business circles, a name associated with integrity, trust, and values. To honour his legacy and keep his principles alive, I decided to create a brand that would carry his name forward," Shah recalls.

Chandrakant Shah had long envisioned transitioning the family business from pro audio trading to manufacturing. Shah Audio, the company he founded, became well known as a distributor for several international brands, including **Yamaha**, **Sun Infonet** and **Sonotone**, a legacy that continues to remain an important part of the business today. **CKS Acoustics**, however, was born out of a firm resolve to put Indian manufacturing on the map.

Building the Manufacturing Backbone

In 2019, the first manufacturing facility was established in Gandhinagar, near Shah's home city of Ahmedabad, within a government-recognised **GIDC Electronics Zone**. Reflecting on the early days, Shah notes that setting up a factory was far from straightforward. "Manufacturing brings challenges that trading never reveals—processes, quality control, people management, compliance and constant innovation. But challenges also bring clarity." For its loudspeaker production, CKS Acoustics primarily sources components locally, working with suppliers across Mumbai, Delhi and Gujarat in line with its Make in India commitment. Electronic components, including transistors, are procured through Indian suppliers such as **Shiv Electronics** and **KK Electronics**, with sourcing from globally recognised manufacturers like **Toshiba**. Speaker baskets and chassis are supplied by specialist manufacturers in Delhi, while MS baskets and several structural components are produced in-house for tighter quality control. Further strengthening this integrated approach, Shah holds a 20% stake in **Bright Laser**, a subsidiary focused on speaker chassis manufacturing. Printed circuit boards (PCBs) are produced by **Quick Circuit**, another CKS Acoustics subsidiary.

Manufacturing Realities in India

Aside from the challenges CKS Acoustics faced during its inception, Shah also highlighted the broader obstacles confronting companies committed

to manufacturing entirely in India. One of the biggest milestones the country must cross to compete on a global scale in professional audio manufacturing is the independent production of semiconductors. Shah believes that within the next two to three years, this gap could begin to close, driven by increasing investments and initiatives already underway across the country. Another major hurdle, according to Shah, is quality. While Indian manufacturing is being taken seriously and production volumes are rising, finesse remains an area of concern. "China doesn't choose between quality and quantity, they dominate both. In India, we're focusing on quantity, but quality still tends to evade us. This is something we need to tackle collectively as an industry." He adds that although India is steadily upgrading its manufacturing machinery and processes, the ecosystem is still catching up. "The intent is there, the investments are happening, but it will take time before we truly match global benchmarks."

India's "Make in India" initiative has gained momentum in recent years, propelled by government-led initiatives aimed at turning the country into a globally competitive production hub. Examples include Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme, RAMP (Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance), India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) and many more. Shah points out that

With a production capacity of 400 loudspeakers per day and a sourcing cycle of just 21 days, CKS Acoustics has streamlined their entire workflow



while government manufacturing initiatives are well intentioned, they are effective only if manufacturers are aware of them and know how to access them, a gap that remains evident among young entrepreneurs. “The lack of a single, transparent system for information and licensing often forces first-time manufacturers to rely on costly consultants, complicating self-sustained manufacturing,” Shah offers a note of caution to younger entrepreneurs considering a similar path.

“We currently manufacture speaker components, HF, PA Amplifiers, PA boosters, PA from the AB Class, H Class, TD Class and D Class. We make speaker cabinets of dual 15-inch, bass and line array,” Shah states confidently.

In an industry where many manufacturers adhere to similar design language and product philosophies, Shah chose a different approach. “My dream was never limited to products alone. My dream was to create employment, empower Indian talent, and help people fulfil their dreams — just as I was fulfilling mine,” he adds.

Rather than following industry leaders, Shah Audio prioritised user-friendly features, improved ergonomics and enhanced aesthetic value. At a time when the PA industry largely operated in a black-and-white visual landscape, the company introduced blue and grey dials. Unconventional, yes, but the move helped establish a distinct brand identity.

“Over the last six years, we have learned immensely, especially in product design, process optimisation, and plant management. By implementing strict SOPs, investing in R&D, and engaging skilled research engineers, CKS Acoustics is steadily evolving into a strong and reliable manufacturing organisation,” Shah explains, reflecting on what it truly takes to scale an idea.

Scaling Systems, Processes and Reach

Outlining the journey behind establishing the company, Shah explains that the process began with GST registration, followed by company incorporation, MSME registration, start-up certification, local body and municipal approvals, Provident Fund registration and, finally, ESIC certification. “We’ve taken a while to build this piece by piece as well, but with the right team and access to resources provided by the Government, we are now a full-fledged Indian manufacturer for almost a decade. We’ve received every legal certification and we’ve ensured that we are hand-to-hand in parity with major companies globally.” He adds that the process is far from uniform. “It’s a long journey, we were in 3 years in R&D. Some of these certifications can take up to 2 months. It’s not a one-size-fits-all either, for example, the Gujarat government took 1½ years to give us a certificate; the same might not be true if you are starting a business in another part of India.”

Shah’s emphasis on practical, user centric solutions has helped the brand gain traction across the country, particularly within small to mid scale projects. Beyond this, Shah Audio has focused on enabling sustained growth rather than stagnation, taking measured steps to enter international markets. The company has begun exporting its products to the Middle East and South Africa, further reinforcing its philosophy of Make in India, Build for the world.

Within CKS Acoustics, operations are supported by a custom built ERP system that enables real time tracking of inventory and production workflows. This system plays a key role in maintaining efficiency and consistency as manufacturing volumes continue to scale.

Quality has remained a central focus since day one. Instead of adopting the table based assembly approach commonly used by many factories in India—where products are built individually and at a slower pace, CKS Acoustics im-

CKS Acoustics’ disciplined conveyor-led workflow underscores its commitment to quality and advancing the “Make in India” philosophy



plemented a conveyor belt production system from the outset, aligning itself with global manufacturing standards. “This decision gives us the upper hand in both precision and speed. This enables consistent quality of the products for all our customers.”

Looking ahead, Shah sees expansion beyond professional audio as a natural next step. “Our long term goal is to grow not only in professional audio, but also in stage lighting and the energy sector, building a diversified, technology driven Indian enterprise.”

This growth is underpinned by a realistic expansion plan. Currently, CKS Acoustics operates two service centres in Gandhinagar and Ahmedabad, with ambitions to scale this network to 20 locations. “We will share the manuals and designs to all the service centres, creating a network for our customers to rely on. We’re on track to accomplish this within the year!”

As with any factory, the number of units you churn out is a needle mover for your factory’s success, and here, CKS Acoustics, shines. “In a single day, we can manufacture up to 400 speakers. Raw material procurement takes around 21 days, while assembly and deployment are completed within a day. Through multiple conveyor-belt iterations and a well-trained workforce, we’ve been able to perfect this process and achieve these efficiencies.”

Market Share, Strategy and Emerging Trends

“As we have just begun, we are currently standing at 0.5% of the market. In three years, we aim to reach a 2% share of India’s professional audio market,” Shah states.

Addressing evolving trends, Shah highlights the growing importance of social media marketing in today’s digital landscape. “We are employing youth who are more social media savvy, as this is an untapped resource which can be instrumental in growing your business.” While product quality remains paramount, Shah adds, “the product’s quality surely speaks for itself, but sometimes you also have to speak for it.” He notes that while legacy brands often rely on traditional marketing methods, such approaches may deliver limited results in a rapidly changing market.

In a post pandemic India, live sound and concert experiences are seeing renewed momentum, but Shah points to other growing segments as well. Engineered and integrated conferencing solutions and home audio systems are witnessing increased demand. “With rising sound pollution levels and government regulation on the same, there is a demand for indoor arena equipment, and home theatre and huddle systems for offices. Real success lies in understanding people before products,” he observes. Driven by remote working trends and the need for quieter, controlled environments, Shah anticipates strong growth in the indoor audio segment, including closed auditoriums, in the years ahead.

Legacy That Endures

CKS Acoustics is being shaped as an organisation built to stand the test of time—an institution guided by innovation, ethics and purpose. Its tagline, *Innovation for a Better Tomorrow*, reflects this long term vision and commitment to meaningful progress.

Akshay closes with a quote that captures both the company’s ethos and his personal connection to the Make in India narrative: “*Kal hum rahe na rahe, hamare kaam yaad zaroor aayenge*. That, to me, is the true meaning of legacy.”

CKS Acoustics aims to scale up nationwide with 20 service centres, targeting a future 2% share of India’s pro audio market

