

The brains behind parcel sorting



A-Plus Automation's innovation and customer service has helped it become a leader in its field. (From left: finance director Benson Lee and managing director Rodney Ham.) PHOTO: OCBC

A-Plus Automation's foresight and innovation has helped it to stay on top of the logistics and sortation game

By Gilbert Wong

Most of us have shopped online over the years but we hardly think about the process behind getting our order shipped from the retailer to us. We may be familiar with the last-mile couriers we see at our door, but A-Plus Automation has been one of the major players behind the scenes ensuring that our parcels are safely and efficiently sorted out of the thousands of items packed daily.

Established in 2010, A-Plus Automation specialises in the

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Mr Rodney Ham, managing director, A-Plus Automation

design, creation, manufacturing and installation of automated sortation machinery and equipment for various industries such as food, logistics and e-commerce, and it has grown from a small 1,000 sq m plant to a 3,000 sq m factory in Malaysia today.

The company has continually strived to improve its services and offerings by combining well-engineered machinery with responsive customer service, but it was a watershed moment in 2014 that helped propel it to greater heights.

“When online shopping was in its infancy, we were fortunate enough to be selected to provide materials-handling equipment in 2015 for the Lazada sorting centre in Thailand,” says Mr Rodney Ham, managing director of A-Plus Automation. This was to automate operations and manage increasing parcel volume for last-mile delivery.

Thanks to this experience, A-Plus Automation was able to quickly learn and grow along with the burgeoning e-commerce industry, providing automated materials

handling systems across South-east Asia, and growing its revenue three times in the past few years. At its peak, A-Plus Automation designed and built sortation equipment which could sort 12,000 to 18,000 pph (parcels per hour) in around four months, including installation and commissioning concurrently, in Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi and Malaysia as part of the 11.11 sales in 2018.

For Mr Ham, this success can be attributed to constant innovation and understanding the demands of customers intimately. “To stand out among the competitors, we pride ourselves as an innovative company that is able to design and devise good solutions to our customers for their operational needs,” he says.

Part of this includes the company's ability to design and build equipment within a short delivery

window, and install and commission with minimal lead time. As A-Plus Automation's manufacturing base is in Batu Pahat, operating costs are lower, allowing for the reduction in product pricing. Additionally, it can tap a strong network of regional partners to assist in installation and after-sales support to provide exceptional customer service.

“We are constantly looking at better ways of designing equipment for our customers through their feedback, and are relentless in seeking innovative designs to be ahead of the competition,” says Mr Ham.

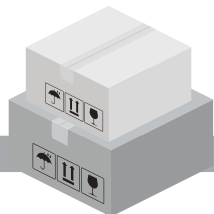
Looking ahead, Mr Ham plans to have a two-pronged approach for even further growth – upgrading their skills and technical ability by enhancing research and development, and by expanding their regional network even further.

“We will further strengthen our production to meet the demand for high-quality products in the fast-growing food production and e-commerce industries,” he says. “By venturing into North Asia, new opportunities will open and relationships can be established with new partners to bring our systems to the e-commerce sector.”

MILESTONES

2016

- Secured a few large sortation projects for a sorting rate of up to 12,000 pph in Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines.



2017

- Made further inroads into the regional sort centre and commissioned more than six systems of the Wave Sorter and Shoe Sorter in Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia.
- Recognised in the SME100 Fast Moving Companies Award and among the top 15 companies of the prestigious Emerging Enterprise award by OCBC Bank.

2018

- Recognised as a well-established sortation solution provider and a specialist system integrator for sort centres and warehouse fulfilment sectors.

2019

- Handled multi-million-order projects and implemented sortation systems up to 36,000 pph in Thailand and 24,000 pph in Indonesia. Revenue surged almost 1.5 times from the previous year.
- Recognised as one of Singapore's Fastest Growing Companies by Statista and The Straits Times.

2020

- Handled multi-million-order projects and implemented sortation systems up to 36,000 pph in Thailand and 24,000 pph in Indonesia.
- Recognised as one of Singapore's Fastest Growing Companies by Statista and The Straits Times.

2021

- Recognised as one of Singapore's Fastest Growing Companies by Statista and The Straits Times.

