

Navigating for success

Companies like Tru-Marine enable goods to be delivered to ports on time

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NINETY per cent of world trade is transported all over the world by ships, which in turn rely on turbochargers to keep their engines running smoothly.

And it is companies such as Tru-Marine which specialise in turbocharger overhaul and repair that enable goods to be delivered to ports on time.

Tru-Marine's world-class recognition did not come easily. David Loke and several friends set up the company to do general ship repairs in 1977.

And it was only over decades of hard work and close watch of the industry that Mr Loke noticed a gap in the market – that there was a need for

a niche turbocharger servicing company.

So the company ventured into it and helped customers save costs by repairing worn out components.

The company's unwavering dedication to excellence over the years has led to numerous accolades, including the prestigious Enterprise 50 Special Five Year Award in 2009.

In the same year, Tru-Marine attained the Singapore Quality Award (SQA), which is the highest level national award for business excellence in both processes and management systems.

Currently, Tru-Marine has an established network with its headquarters in Singapore and seven service stations in Tianjin, Guangzhou, and Shanghai in China, Sharjah in the Middle East, Mumbai in India, Hai Phong in Vietnam and Rotterdam in the Netherlands.

In the near future, Tru-Marine aims to be at major ports around the world, making it more accessible to a wider customer base. With this in mind, Tru-Marine already has its plans installed for expansion and penetration into sea ports with major traffic volume and potential port developments.

Its success relies on constant innovation. To remain at the forefront of the industry, the company has invested heavily in research and development. The investment has generated positive returns with the introduction of a new generation of Hybrid bearings for turbochargers. These are the first in the world to be introduced for application within marine turbochargers.

Tru-Marine makes provisions for innovation. An example of this is a cutting-edge laser technology with aerospace precision. This helps the company to better serve the needs of its customers.

Operating in a niche industry requiring specialised skills, there is a constant need to upgrade the skills of its workers. As such, the company has set aside a percentage of its yearly revenue on training programmes for continuous personnel development.



Foresight: It was only after close watch of the industry that David Loke noticed a gap in the market for a niche turbocharger servicing company

Tru-Marine values its human capital highly and did not retrench its workers during the recent financial crisis. Instead, it took the opportunity to improve their skills in order to gear up for the market recovery ahead.

Tru-Marine is a firm believer of contributing back to the community it operates in, as well as to the environment. It even engages in corporate social responsibility projects that are carried out beyond the boundaries of Singapore.

Since 2000, Tru-Marine had been selected to hold an open-house for companies in emerging markets to view and learn from its business operations, hosting government delegations of various countries.

In line with Tru-Marine's constant pursuit for excellence, the company participates in causes that recognise and encourage talent, such as sponsoring Singapore's first all Women's Everest Team in 2009 and undergraduate scholarship funds. Furthermore, Tru-Marine has initiated "Go-Green" efforts, conserving energy and reducing wastage in its daily operations.

Under a strong leadership anchored in a culture of business excel-

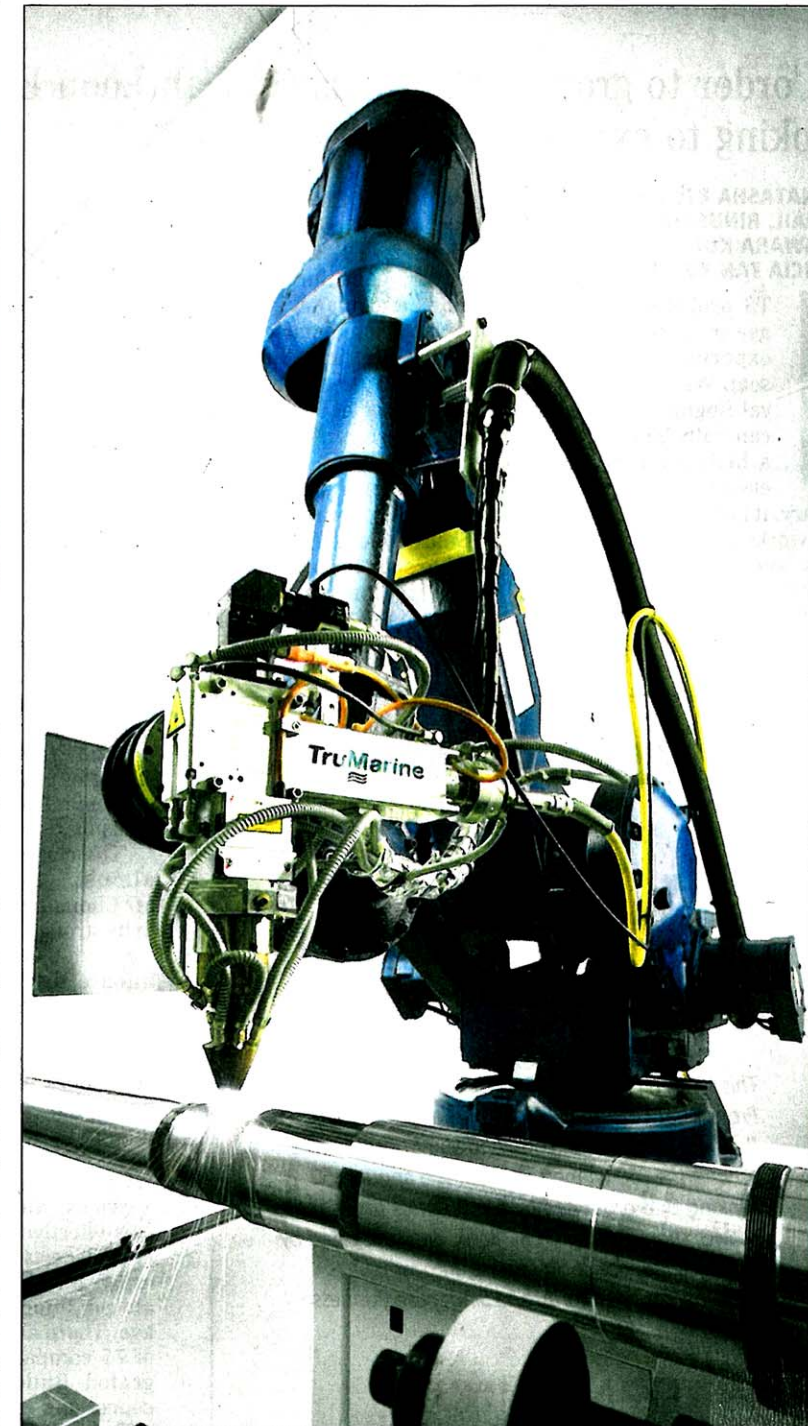
lence, Tru-Marine has steadily grown to be a global marine SME. Anticipating an improvement in market conditions in the near future, Tru-Marine is geared up to seize upcoming opportunities.

Long-term partnerships with research institutions such as SIMTech and A*Star allow Tru-Marine to leverage on their specialised expertise to quickly replace old technology with more advanced ones.

Furthermore, attaining the SQA contributes to the reputation of Tru-Marine which is essential to compete globally. As Singapore forecasts a growth estimate of 3-5 per cent in 2010, it is companies like Tru-Marine that will contribute to it.

James Loke, director of Tru-Marine aptly concludes "our value innovations stemming from either technological capabilities or employee ingenuity will enable Tru-Marine to be distinctly differentiated from our competitors. More importantly, we will be better able to delight our customers with higher value-added solutions, as well as exceptional service".

The writers are students of NUS Business School



Technology forefront: Tru-Marine makes provision for innovation. An example of this is a cutting-edge laser technology with aerospace precision which helps the company better serve the needs of its customers

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