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Alex Ea (left), managing director of HUB Distributors

better visibility. With the enhanced system, which was developed with grants from then SPRING Singapore (now Enterprise Singapore), customers can log into their accounts and get real-time information at their fingertips.

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The company is also in the process of introducing a voice-based solution at their warehouses which sends information to workers through a headset telling them where to go and what items to pick. This system replaces the traditional system which require pickers to print out a list that they need to refer to during the picking process. By freeing a worker's hands and eyes, voice directed systems improve efficiency, accuracy, and safety.

HUB is even exploring the use of augmented reality technology to further improve productivity and reduce costs. Such solutions can identify where a product is located at a much faster pace and more accurately than can be achieved by a human worker. On the logistics front, the company is also looking into the use of electric vehicles to service one of its MNC customers.

Looking ahead, HUB sees opportunities that it can capitalise on as the supply chain industry becomes increasingly transparent. "Blockchain and platforms are the future of the space and ASEAN will become a booming logistics hub of the world, with e-commerce a huge driver of this growth. And as a heritage local SME firm, HUB is looking to venture overseas with an innovative new business model," said Mr Ea.

He added: "We need to constantly keep ourselves updated on future industry trends as well as engage our staff to ensure that they constantly upgrade their skillsets and mindsets to be adaptable to changes."



SINGAPORE 1000
SINGAPORE SME 1000
INTERNATIONAL 100

GOING THE EXTRA MILE

HUB Distributors is embracing new technology to better service its customers.

SINCE it was set up almost 30 years ago, logistics company HUB Distributors has established a track record of providing high-quality services to meet the changing needs of its customers. In recent years, it has introduced innovations such as "voice-directed" warehousing solutions that aim to enhance efficiency and reduce human error in their operations.

Singapore-based HUB provides end-to-end supply chain solutions for its mix of international and local customers that are primarily in the fast-moving consumer goods sector. Its suite of services include local transportation, warehousing and distribution, container haulage, local clearances from ports, last-mile deliveries, as well as freight forwarding.

Over the years, the company has obtained various certifications that attest to the quality of its offering. These include the Secure Trade Partnership Certification, along with several quality standards such as Halal Certified Warehouse and ISO9001 certification.

More recently, the company has been recognised for its consistent revenue growth, which has been growing by around 25 per cent year-on-year. This has led to HUB being recognised at the Singapore 1000 Awards for the past five years.

Mr Alex Ea, the managing director of HUB Distributors, attributes this success primarily to the company's service-oriented team. "We have a dedicated and resourceful team, bringing a strong balance of offering flexibility in dealing with customers' requests such that we will be able to offer quick and reliable services at a reasonable price. We believe in service," said Mr Ea.

In light of growing competition, however, the company has had to adapt its operations and invest in technology to better service its customers. "We face threats from neighbouring counties that have more competitive costs structures, as well as increasing demands from customers that we would not be able to meet without investing in technology as an enabler of the business," explained Mr Ea.

He added that competition is also emerging from companies which are not primarily logistics providers, including ecommerce players like Alibaba, JD.com and Amazon.

To stay relevant in such an environment, the company is planning to upgrade its warehousing management systems to boost productivity, reduce reliance on manpower and provide customers with