

ATT Systems zeroes in on regional expansion

The tech firm has plans to grow aggressively in the next 3-5 years, reports **CLEMENT QUEK**



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TO THE average man, a queue system is simply this – press a button, get a queue ticket, and wait for your turn. But there can be more to a queue system than meets the eye. With some innovative thinking, ATT Systems developed an intelligent and more efficient queue system; one which tracks the key performance indicators of customer service officers by capturing relevant statistics as they work.

"At any one time, we can track what a customer service officer is doing at his counter, in terms of how efficient he is in handling calls or customers," says ATT Systems' chief executive Kenny Teo.

Employers, in turn, are able to gather data in the area of customer service and improve existing service standards. The intelligent queue system is one of multiple IT solutions created by ATT Systems.

Others include using short message service (SMS) to remind customers of their appointments and facilitating real-time online visibility of actual crowd size at an event.

The technology company, a first time winner of the Enterprise 50 Awards last year, specialises in designing and developing electronic systems and sub-systems for the health care, aviation, and traffic management industries.

It caters to clients from the private and public sectors, which includes government bodies like the Land Transport Authority, SingHealth polyclinics, and the Central Provident Board, and businesses like Changi Airport Group and CapitaLand.

ATT Systems has plans to grow aggressively in the next three to five years, which will comprise an initial public offering, says Mr Teo, who is an electronic and electrical engineer by training and has a degree in science and management.

Boost revenue

He aims to increase revenue this year by 50 per cent to \$15 million, up from \$10 million in 2010.

The company has six divisions, of which three – systems integration, queue management, and traffic management – contribute about 80 per cent of revenue.

It has proprietary systems in

these three divisions, which were developed by its in-house R&D department, and intends to export these products into the region.

The overseas market will be the key driving force for ATT Systems' growth as the company has already reached a stage of slow growth in the domestic market, says Mr Teo.

He expects overseas revenue contribution to make up 40 per cent of total revenue this year, up from 10 per cent in 2010.

The company plans to open three new offices overseas this year (Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Middle East), after opening three in 2010 (Australia, the Philippines, and Vietnam). The Singapore-based company also has a presence in India, which was set up in 2007, just before the global financial crisis.

"Last year was an investment year for us, when we really started to reach out to the region," says Mr Teo. "And we expect to see some results this year from those investments."

Giving an example, Mr Teo says the company intends to export its queue management system to Australia and India, where the health care industries are thriving.

"In India, we've been exploring its health care sector and we're talking about 29 hospitals which they are going to build in the coming three to five years," he says. He compared the figure to Singapore's, where there is presently only one hospital in the pipeline, which is to be built in western Singapore.

Financing needed

ATT Systems also intends to take on more multi-million-dollar projects in the region, says Mr Teo. But to do so, the company requires financing and that is why it intends to list around 2016.

The company is already preparing for it by transforming its accounting system to conform to listing regulations.

"The chances of listing will depend on the success of the overseas expansion," says Mr Teo. "Once the expansion kicks off, that'll be the period when we need funding."

Mr Teo was an R&D engineer in a multinational company before he founded ATT Systems in 1998 with his business partner, managing director Tan Ann Jee. The latter won an Asia-Pacific Entrepreneurship award for "Most

Promising Entrepreneur" in 2010.

At the start, the company consisted of just the two of them and a technician. Today, however, ATT Systems employs over 200 people, of which half are engineers involved in developing systems.

Participating in the Enterprise 50 Awards is also part of ATT Systems' growth strategy as the company seeks to build its reputation around the region.

"In order to reach out to the region, you must be known to people, and to do that, you must brand yourself," says Mr Teo.

"By winning it (an Enterprise 50 Award), it is a recognition that we are somebody. It tells the region and future partners that we are somebody and a growing company," he adds.

But knowing how to grow and achieving growth are two different matters, says Mr Teo. He said going out into the regional market is not easy as each country has its own challenges and different ways of how things work.

But Mr Teo is optimistic about the prospects and his company's ability to deliver. "We focus on what the customer wants. And we design something which suits their needs."