

## Focused on lifting service standards to new heights

*A diverse customer base and hiring more staff to bag more contracts is Jenmon's strategy*



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JENMON International's managing director Mark Ong has come a long way from the days of helping clear chicken coops and washing his siblings' cars for pocket money. But he has not forgotten the lessons learned from his childhood.

Growing up was not easy, especially being the second youngest of 13 siblings, he recalls. But the survival instinct he developed because of that has served him well as an entrepreneur.

It was this survival instinct that gave him the courage to set up Jenmon in the first place. Mr Ong began his engineering company -

which deals with the design, supply, installation and commissioning of lifting equipment - in 2001 after finding himself jobless following the dotcom crash.

Having worked in the lifting equipment industry before setting up Jenmon, Mr Ong was able to draw on his network of contacts and use his experience to gain clients' confidence and grow his business.

The company has seen healthy revenue trends since it started. For instance, revenue rose 50 per cent in 2008 from 2007, net profit increased four times from 2002 to 2003, and 50 per cent in 2004 from 2003.

But Jenmon is not resting on its laurels - the company continues to make improvements, especially in service quality.

'Of course, customers are our top priority,' says Mr Ong. 'Whatever we do, we have to ensure that we provide, not just good quality products but a high standard of service. It is this that will help us forge long-term partnerships.'

General manager Joyce Ting agrees, saying Jenmon's customer-centric culture helps it stand out from the pack.

'Some engineering companies do not emphasise the importance of service quality as much as they do production quality,' she says. 'That's why we are trying to inculcate a service-oriented mindset in every one of our employees. That's how Jenmon differentiates itself from other players.'

The company has followed through on this policy. Concrete steps have been taken - and are still being taken - to improve service standards.

For example, all employees have attended a two-day service quality training course conducted by an external operator.

Even more impressive is Jenmon's commitment to conducting regular in-house upgrading courses on Saturdays, which cover many topics including product training and presentation skills.

The company hopes that through these upgrading courses, employees will be able to help boost the top line to offset rising costs.

Jenmon also hopes to boost revenue by bucking the trend and hiring more sales staff.

Recruitment started in December last year and the number of sales staff has since doubled. Management believes that increasing staff strength will help net more contracts.

Expanding overseas in order to broaden its customer base is another option Jenmon is considering.

It is working closely with International Enterprise Singapore to discuss expansion into the region.

As for the economic downturn, Jenmon has not felt the impact yet, as it still has orders to fill up to mid-2009.

Ms Ting says diversifying the company's customer base is an important buffer against recession.

'This business is very interesting because the scope of customers we deal with is wide,' she says.

'This is very advantageous, because when recessions come, some industries may be hit. But if we can stay focused on our other customers in other industries, we will be able to ride out the storm.'

Mr Ong also reckons a diverse customer base makes for a brighter future.

'Since we cater to so many different sectors, including the construction, entertainment and oil and gas sectors, to name a few, I think we will continue to grow as there will always be demand for lifting equipment,' he says.