

BETTER *together*

Powerful partnerships are at the core of Bermaz Auto Bhd's business.

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Bermaz Auto Bhd is a leading distributor of Mazda vehicles, spare parts and after-sales services throughout Malaysia and the Philippines. Formerly known as Berjaya Auto Bhd, the company operates 10 sales, spare parts, and after-sales service centres; a body and paint repair centre; and more than 77 dealer centres.

For the past 10 years, Bermaz CEO and Executive Director Ben Yeoh Choon San has successfully led the company through periods of growth and fiscal challenges. Working with Mazda as its anchor partner, Ben has also aligned Bermaz with a number of long-term, mutually beneficial suppliers, allowing it to meet the ASEAN's strong demand for Mazda vehicles and first-class customer service.

"Our current supplier relationships are very strong – we understand each other perfectly and there has been good collaboration for many years. Our customers' expectations are constantly changing. Together with our partners, Bermaz aims to exceed those expectations," explains Ben. "As our business expands to reach new markets and regions, we are increasing the capability and scope of our suppliers.

"Our localisation program with Mazda benefits many local vendors in supporting industries. What benefits us, benefits them. While working with the local vendors, we have established collaborations between several Hiroshima vendors, creating

opportunities for joint ventures and technical assistance. This works to enhance the capabilities of the local vendors and bring them up to the same level as the international producers."

For the past decade, Ben and his management team – many of whom were major players in the turnaround of Hyundai in Malaysia, then owned by Berjaya – have continued to establish key partnerships. When Ben initially joined Bermaz when it was still Berjaya Auto, in 2008, he brought with him a number of strong suppliers from his previous tenure at Hyundai.

This included Malaysia-based Shin Hing Trading, which specialises in manufacturing doormats, car mats for original equipment manufacturers, PVC coil mats and rolls. "Shin Hing has been a loyal supplier of ours since the late 90s," says Ben. As the only professional PVC coil mat maker in Malaysia, Shin Hing was awarded a 'Pioneer Status' manufacturing licence by the government – allowing it to import duty-free raw materials and machinery, and thereby reduce manufacturing costs. With access to technology from its partners in Europe, mainland China and Taiwan, Shin Hing is able to manufacture high-quality products at a lower cost. "It is a reliable and financially strong supplier that has sourced various items for Bermaz," says Ben.

Delloyd Group of Companies is another business that has come a long way with Bermaz in supplying crucial electronic

components and accessories. "Together with our principal partners from Japan and Korea, we engaged Delloyd in a joint venture to ensure all electronic parts are manufactured and supplied with no issues regarding intellectual property rights."

The partnership between Bermaz and J.K. Wire Harness Sdn Bhd has also further enhanced and strengthened the business of both companies through the sharing of knowledge and contacts. "I've worked with the team from J.K. Wire Harness for almost 20 years. We introduced them to our Japanese partners and they supply Bermaz with automotive wire harnesses," explains Ben.

Then there's APM Delta Seating Systems Snd Bhd – a 2016 joint venture between APM Automotive Holdings Bhd and Delta Kogyo Co. It develops, manufactures and assembles automotive seating systems for Mazda vehicles. "APM Delta has helped us in our initial localisation programs by supplying us with local car seats. What is most important is that the company is prepared to go into technical collaboration with our principal partners and the Japanese suppliers

they recommend," explains Ben. "They've been extremely helpful in supplying automotive components including suspension systems, shock absorbers and other plastic items. They're our major suppliers and one of our strongest supporters."

To organise its regional and international suppliers, Bermaz looks to PKT Logistics Group to manage its supply chain. PKT offers its customers increased efficiency and reduced transit time, thanks to its ongoing focus on operational excellence and end-to-end management strategy. "PKT Logistics has been with us since we took on the Hyundai franchise. Also located here in Malaysia, PKT is responsible for importing our various components and managing the logistic activities for our exports to the regional market."

With a vision to grow and bring further value to stakeholders, Ben comments that he plans to continue to explore new products and partnership opportunities that will complement Bermaz's Mazda offering, now and into the future, as well as enhance its overall customer service experience. ■



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