

A distinguished three decades of growth and trust makes for a strong backing to the present-day endeavours of TEHO International. The Singapore ropes specialist, active across industry and maritime pursuits alike, dynamically ensures that each metre of rope it provides to market is perfect down to the final fibre. Tony White spoke with Guy Blondé, Senior Manager of Corporate Strategy, on the initiatives shaping TEHO today.



TIED TO SUCCESS

IT is an exciting period of growth for Singapore's TEHO International. The company's diversification strategy is leading its expertise into water treatment, together with mechanical engineering for oil and gas – not to mention successful forays into property development.

That said, it is ropes in which the TEHO name was made, and it is a name that continues to gain acclaim across the world.

"Last year saw another important step in our internationalisation strategy," said Guy Blondé, Senior Manager of Corporate Strategy for TEHO International. "We have an established presence in both Panama and Spain as of 2016."

In fact, 2016 was a particularly landmark year for the business, being the 30th anniversary of TEHO International's operations.

"It was a milestone indeed," Mr Blondé said. "Following the company's foundation, we acquired a warehouse in short order, and the current CEO of our enterprise joined in 1994. By 1999 we had integrated a second



warehouse into our operation, and soon established our first logistics points in Sharjah, Antwerp and Houston."

With the incorporation of its first subsidiary in 2008 in USA, followed by new subsidiaries in Shanghai and Rotterdam in 2012 and 2013 respectively, it is apparent that TEHO International's growth has never been more rapid and ambitious.

Promising progress

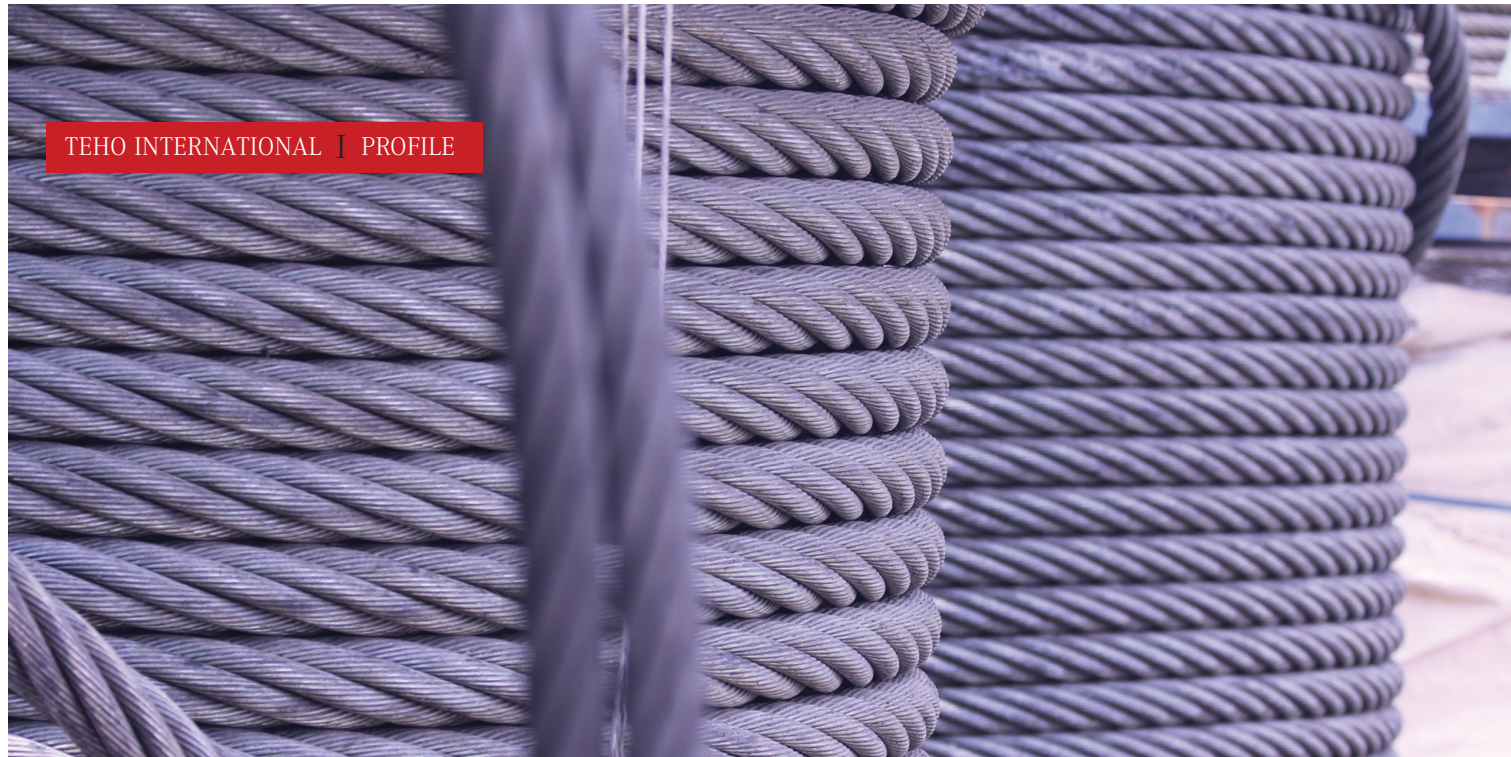
TEHO International has its headquarters in Singapore's Commonwealth Lane and altogether, its staff numbers in the city-state stands at around 120 personnel.

"59 of those comprise ropes staff and specialists, and the rest are employees of our other subsidiaries," Mr Blondé commented. "Singapore is also where we sustain our major warehouses."

TEHO International does good business with its present setup, and its globalisation strategy holds much promise, yet the company is equally fervent in its drive to advance research and development into rope manufacture, as well as complementary products.

"We have been working with one of the world's leading high performance fiber manufacturers in producing a new kind of rope, which recently entered its trial phase," Mr Blondé said. "The advantages offered by this new rope are two-fold. Firstly, it is highly resistant to heat and wear and tear. Secondly, it comprises entirely of material which can





be recycled, making for a superb addition to any of the ever-more ecologically conscious ships afloat in the world today and going forward."

TEHO International also provides the market with certified Biobased wire rope greases, and its endeavours in doing so have been similarly met with acclaim due to the ingenuity that the firm demonstrates.

"In short, environmentalism is similarly important to shipowners and industrialists in the lubrication they use for their rope systems," Mr Blondé remarked. "We have been able to develop products that meet the environmental standards recently set forth by advanced economies such as the United States, and thereby enjoy a head-start among our contemporaries in supplying to that market."

Keeping supply lines strong

With many of its supplier relationships standing at over 20 years in the making, TEHO International understands that a good deal is much more than a handshake and a simple transaction.

"In fact, we work very closely together with our manufacturers, and we are able to tailor rope designs, finishing, marking and packaging to meet our clients' requirements and to differentiate us from the competition," Mr Blondé said. "We are fortunate insofar as our staff demonstrate superb technical expertise. Furthermore, we have a worldwide supply network which enables us to meet client expectations rapidly and efficiently."

TEHO International enjoys customers in the shipping, oil and gas, and crane operations sectors; a collective maritime client base that is growing all of the time. "That growth is particularly pronounced at our European premises of late, and has led to the acquisition of a rigging shop nearby," noted Mr Blondé. "As environmentalism comes ever more to the fore, our capabilities are inspiring great gains in growth. Sustainability is a big trend in today's globalised market."

To match pace with opportunities as much as lay the foundations of tomorrow's success, TEHO EuROPE has recently invested in new facilities in Rotterdam.

"It is a 4,000sqm site, and represents an investment of around €1.3 million," Mr Blondé stated.

Prepared to excel

With 30 years of progress behind the company, it is understandable that confidence and ambition underpin all that TEHO International does when looking ahead to the future.

"What we are seeing in the maritime sector specifically is a great deal of consolidation in ship management and shipowner firms," Mr Blondé outlined. "We enjoy tremendous customer loyalty even amid such dynamics.

"With current market conditions as they are, price is more important to customers today than it ever has been, yet what always wins in the end is quality and service, which assures our success. Our experience has shown us that many of our competitors who sometimes buy distribution networks and other activities end up too big, causing a lack of specialisation that we are fortunate not

to demonstrate ourselves. We have a specific focus and concentrate on doing what we do and doing it well."

As TEHO International looks forward, however, it is more than its ropes legacy that will win the prosperity promised by tomorrow.

"We intend to continue in both globalisation and diversification," Mr Blondé highlighted. "Our property development endeavours alone are showing superb promise, and our water treatment capabilities are finding good traction not just in oil and gas businesses, but also in the industrial and leisure sector at resorts and the like.

"In Teho Water, we are a strong believer in optimisation and increased efficiencies in terms of process innovation through thorough knowledge of water. Using a hybrid technology, we incorporate available proven technologies and our knowledge of water to deliver clean water with the smallest energy

bill and minimal maintenance. Going forward, we are scaling up our capability in the designing, building and operation of a medium sized water desalination plant to support the utility segment such as power generation and water supply for new townships.

"Our TEHO Engineering subsidiary is strongly anchored in the Singapore shipyards but due to the current downturn in the oil and gas market, we are looking to introduce existing products to other markets and even exploring opportunities with new products in new markets like hotel business and public transport terminals."

Mr Blondé concluded: "Through this diversification, we are able to sidestep the major crises that may afflict shipping and offshore businesses going forward, while also sustaining our strengths and combining innovation with our existing portfolio to what we hope will be inspiring effect." ■

