

THE RIGHT FIT:

Aspen Glove Realises Smart Manufacturing Vision, Harnesses SAP to Drive Innovation

By Iskandar Basha Abdul Kadir, Managing Director – Aspen Glove

Headquartered in Malaysia's science and innovation hub, Kulim Hi-Tech Park, our facilities currently span over 29 acres to support 48 production lines, with each line capable of producing 38,000 gloves per hour. This equates to a production of close to 15 billion pieces of gloves yearly. As a company, we are 100% committed to sustainability, and all our business processes strictly adhere to global standards and regulations.

Adopting smart manufacturing processes as an intelligent enterprise

The whole glove industry started as a manual industry, having been through several revolutions and we are now looking at the move towards optimisation for the application of smart technology in glove manufacturing aligned with Industry 4.0.

Smart manufacturing can clearly be seen as a force to be reckoned with, shaping a variety of factors such as business and product strategy, equipment and warehousing, and workforce assembly. We are in an era where technology is at the heart of every business, and companies need to embrace a smarter, more digital and data-dominant future.

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the demand on gloves exponentially. This requires our industry to constantly innovate, improve our manufacturing processes to drive effective production planning whilst optimising the production output and material flow, as well as ensuring world-class quality management.

A new level of connectivity and transparency

Right from the beginning, we have placed utmost emphasis on leveraging Industry 4.0 technologies to not only provide our customers with the best-in-class products but to also become future ready. We have adopted a strategic 'digital-first, data-driven' approach to becoming an intelligent enterprise and smart manufacturer.

With a focus on innovation and growth, the natural choice for us was the SAP S/4HANA Cloud, a complete ERP system with built-in intelligent technologies. We have invested in the SAP S/4HANA Cloud to ensure that globally acknowledged best practices are followed in all our business processes from production planning, supply chain, plant maintenance, quality management to finance and accounting.

Dealing with pandemic-related disruptions also meant that an extra level of precaution was needed in our implementation. In ensuring

strict adherence to COVID-19 protocols, the entire process was managed remotely by Synnove Systems and the SAP S/4HANA Cloud solution was successfully deployed without the need for any onsite presence.

Thanks to the SAP S/4HANA Cloud, we have revolutionised the quality and customisation of our products, together with the speed of delivery to meet evolving end-customer demands. Today's customers have high expectations of product traceability and fulfilment. In that sense, our digital transformation is very much aligned in meeting those needs as SAP real-time data systems disperse information using blockchain technology to as many people as necessary, enabling decisions to be made quicker and avoiding unnecessary duplications. This allows us to offer our services instantly with full information disclosure and allows us to be very agile, which as a result, increases our competitive edge.

As the demand for our products continue to grow, in line with our commitment to Environmental, Social and Corporate governance (ESG), we will continue to play our part in keeping our planet safe while ensuring the highest quality of our gloves. In addition to the implementation of environmentally friendly practices, we are constantly engaging in research and development of biodegradable, highest quality gloves, and technology has enabled us to make accurate data-driven comparisons and to improve product planning and management.

The road ahead...

We at Aspen Glove are aware that innovation is not just about us, as we are just one part of a supply chain. We have always been mindful of our roles in influencing our entire supply chain and actively encourage our partners to upgrade, innovate, and automate together with us. Highly influenced by Industry 4.0 and its cutting-edge smart technology, we will continue to strive to accelerate value in all aspects of our management, business strategies and operations. Connecting production with end-to-end process execution across the supply chain has enabled us to reach new levels of connectivity and adapt to change on the fly.

Digital transformation is no easy task, rather, it is a monumental process that is pivotal for manufacturers, to build their resilience and be connected to the future. In a world that is constantly evolving, we are future-ready and will continue to accelerate 'value creation with technology' to enable growth for us and our entire ecosystem ■

Aspen Glove Sdn Bhd (Aspen Glove) is a medical-grade nitrile and natural rubber glove manufacturer. As a company, our mission is to deliver best-in-class healthcare gloves to help people stay safe across the world.

