

# Celebrating 45 Years of Mounting Excellence

*B-Tech, the Brit grit of mounting solutions*

The global audio-visual industry may be a hot space for many a product or solution for their aural or visual appeal, by generic consideration. However, there is also a segment in the space – the Mounts segment – that is equally, if not more, important as the visible fancied AV devices for the simple reason that they provide the ‘mainstay’ for those AV systems, irrespective of size and shape.

British Mounting solutions major B-Tech is an exemplification of entrepreneurship and expertise for excellence. On the occasion of the company’s celebrating its 45th Anniversary this year, SIA interacted with the company Managing Director Bennett Matthew, to know what the company is mounting for the current and future. Excerpts:

## **SI ASIA:** Tell us about B-Tech AV Mounts- its genesis, evolution through the decades and current geographical spread.

**MATTHEW:** Armed with £500 and a van, my father set up the company in 1972, as a supplier of generic audio video accessories to the retail trade in London. Our first ever bracket was the BT1 Tilt and Swivel Loudspeaker Mount which was launched in 1979. Over the next decade a number of additional loudspeaker mounts were introduced into the range, later followed by CRT television mounts, all designed and manufactured in the UK.

By the end of the 90’s, Plasma screens were entering the market and with B-Tech’s experience designing mounting solutions, we were in prime position to benefit from this revolution in viewing technology. Throughout the 2000’s, our in-house designed mounting range continued to expand to cover the professional AV market as well as the retail consumer market, which B-Tech was very strong in.

In order to keep up with demand and cost pressures, in 2002, we set up our operations in Hong Kong to oversee and manage the transfer of production from the UK to the Far East. One major benefit of this was that it allowed B-Tech to sell direct from the factory to the four corners of the globe. I had also spent a lot of time during the late ‘90s on the export side of the business to expand B-Tech across Europe. This, combined with the shift in production to Asia meant B-Tech had evolved into a truly International company.

As of 2017, The B-Tech International Group consists of eight companies around the world, located in the UK, Europe, the Middle East and Asia Pacific. Additionally, thanks to B-Tech’s industry recognised professional range, B-Tech sold its solutions to 49 different countries directly and a further 15 through distribution in the past 12 months.



Bennett Matthew, Managing Director of B-Tech AV Mounts, seen in the background of New stand at Northampton Saints Rugby Football Club where B-Tech recently supplied brackets

## **SI ASIA:** Forty five years of business existence...Could you tell us about the most fulfilling period during this journey?

**MATTHEW:** The progression from a small UK company to an International business has been hugely fulfilling. Setting up new companies and seeing the subsequent success in new territories continues to bring a feeling of satisfaction and immense pride in our achievements.

A specific product range that we are immensely proud of is our System X Range which was launched almost two years ago as a ‘one kit’ solution which could fulfill a multitude of different mounting requirements. Throughout 2016 and 2017 the range received a lot of recognition, with multiple award nominations and a highly commended award at the 2016 AV Awards.

## **SI ASIA:** What was the most challenging time? Of what kind?

**MATTHEW:** The financial crisis from 2008 to 2010 was a particularly challenging time for many UK businesses and B-Tech definitely felt the effects of it during that period. Thankfully, we were able to emerge from that period as a much stronger business and have seen tremendous growth ever since.

## **SI ASIA:** What exactly is B-Tech's core expertise/competence?

**MATTHEW:** Our professional mounting products now make up the largest and most significant part of our product range. The key to their popularity is the user-friendly features designed to save installers both time and money. Modularity is another important aspect- most B-Tech products can be fitted to other B-Tech products; like a giant Meccano or Lego set... everything works with everything else. This means there is no installation challenge which can’t be met with a B-Tech solution. Pop-out mechanisms and micro-adjustment are now included on many different products to make installation and servicing easy

for end-users and trained professional alike. We consider B-Tech products to be of a premium quality at a price point that won't break the bank, giving everyone access to a quality mounting solution with features usually only found on the most expensive products.

### **SI ASIA: Among that wide basket of solutions, what is the most popular/dominant product line/model?**

**MATTHEW:** In recent years, the area which has seen the largest growth and is now our most popular group of solutions are our video wall and digital signage mounts. Video wall mounts, in particular, are core products for us now.

Our BT77 Side-Clamping Loudspeaker Mount is also worthy of a mention. Year-on-year, this model has consistently sold in thousands, and continues to be one of our best sellers. This bracket has now been in the range for almost two decades, which shows how long a product can last if designed well.

### **SI ASIA: Vertical-wise, which segment does B-Tech have its biggest stake in? and why?**

**MATTHEW:** The digital signage 'boom' that we are experiencing right now is really not limited to any vertical market – screen technologies are so prominent in all areas of business now that we strive to make sure we cater to all markets. However, recently, we are finding the retail sector to be particularly strong as well as hospitality and transportation hubs, which is a reasonably good indicator of the current economic state.

### **SI ASIA: What stands B-Tech apart from competition? With so much of product divergence, how would you map the completion?**

**MATTHEW:** It may be clichéd but we consider our success to be down to 'the sum of all parts' of the business. We pride ourselves on the level of customer service that we offer, which begins right at the product design stage, where we often consult key customers as part of the design process and give advanced previews for feedback. The high levels we set are reflected in the products themselves, which are of a high quality and have earned a solid reputation based on their reliability and ease of use. Finally, we have a great team of staff, working at B-Tech offices right across the world, who are dedicated to offering the best service possible and always pay attention to what our customers need the most.

We have an extensive portfolio of off-the-shelf solutions and a dedicated in-house design team who can produce a bespoke solution if needed.

### **SI ASIA: How much emphasis does B-Tech lay on R & D to innovate its product offerings?**

**MATTHEW:** As a manufacturer that designs solutions in-house, R & D is absolutely paramount to our business. In an industry with constantly evolving technology, it's important that our off-the-shelf solutions are designed to be as 'future-proof' as possible, so they cater to all current requirements and those

of any new equipment likely to be released in the near-future. We're constantly working with hardware manufacturers as well as our customers to make sure the products are always designed to cover all eventualities.

### **SI ASIA: Product customization is said to be one big aspect. How intense does it characterize B-Tech? Some demonstrable cases to speak?**

**MATTHEW:** We design our products to be as universal as possible and as mentioned previously, our different solutions all work in conjunction with one another. This makes it very easy to create entirely customized solutions from parts that already exist on the shelf. We do, of course, also offer a bespoke service with short turnaround times for those occasions where something completely unique is required. We also offer this service on an OEM and ODM basis. Unfortunately, we cannot give details of these offerings but the list includes many technology brands including most of the well-known screen manufacturers.

### **SI ASIA: B-Tech is taken to be strong player in Asia Pac. How much of your business is accounted by APAC?**

**MATTHEW:** We have experienced a fast rate of growth in the region, with our APAC turnover doubling in each of the last three years. Our current aim is to see the same rate of growth over the next few years, and we continue to invest in the APAC region to make this happen.

### **SI ASIA: What is B-Tech's immediate priority/task?**

**MATTHEW:** B-Tech's main immediate task is simply to continue to improve on what we are doing – there is always room for improvement!! One of B-Tech's USPs is being a front runner amongst our peers in providing outstanding service to all our partners, and it is imperative that this continues. There are multiple divisions within B-Tech from the designing of the products, to the manufacturing of them, to the global distribution, to the marketing and the sales channels – all of this requires continued reinvestment into B-Tech in order for us to attain the desired levels of service that I believe should be offered. To use a cliché again, treat others how you would like to be treated yourself – simple as that!

This philosophy, together with our overall network expansion strategy, is where our main focus is at the moment. Over the past few years, B-Tech has grown its presence in many regions and markets around the world. We will continue to make significant investment in furthering this, with an increased focus on our geographical footprint in the APAC and MEA markets. Our existing presence, not only through our local branch network (currently in Dubai, Singapore, Hanoi, and Ningbo), but also through our strong business relations with many distributors/integrators/installers, will be the foundation of our efforts to build upon.