

Tackling key gaps in logistics

By Huang Xiao Xiao,
Nina Syafira Bte Ismadi,
Wang Ershan, Janice Wu
and Wut Yee Hlaing

LOGISTICS solutions provider Keyfields was founded to fill the gaps in conventional logistics software, but has since developed a full suite of end-to-end solutions.

Some two decades ago, co-founder Kenny Tan was the chief information officer at a global third-party supply chain management company. There, he noticed that existing logistics software fell short in serving the needs of the industry – and so decided to found his own company.

Seeking out like-minded individuals, he founded Keyfields in 2003 together with Patrick Yeo, who is now the company's head of consulting.

The pivotal moment in the company's origin was when Tan presented his concept of a holistic supply chain management solution to representatives from L'Oreal Cosmetics Singapore.

He showed how he could resolve the company's challenges in managing inventory, which led to a request for a formal quotation. Within two weeks of submitting the proposal, Keyfields scored its first customer.

Making a name

Still, the early years were not easy. At the start, Keyfields found it hard to get customers, as it did not have enough references and potential clients were uncertain about the company's new technology.

However, after winning over other multinational corporations (MNCs) such as Daikin Singapore, the company steadily built up its reputation. Its customers now range from MNCs and large local companies to small and medium-sized enterprises.

It has also secured customers across the Asia-Pacific region, with distributors in Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Japan and China.

Beyond the distribution model, Keyfields also began setting up its own overseas offices from 2016 in



Keyfields co-founder Kenny Tan. The company's customers now range from MNCs and large local companies to SMEs.
PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO

Myanmar – where it conducts research and development – as well as Indonesia and Thailand.

This regional presence helped it to clinch an engineering parts project by port operator PSA Singapore and an indoor farm software project by Panasonic, among others.

Keyfields today offers a comprehensive suite of end-to-end solutions for the transport and logistics industry, covering transport, freight, container, container yard and accounting systems. Its solutions are easily scalable, with new modules easily added when clients expand.

The company also pays close attention to cybersecurity, conducting regular vulnerability assessments and penetration tests to prevent any loss of confidential information. These tests assure clients that they are getting the best quality and support.

Keyfields has won various awards, both as a company and for its specific solutions.

In both 2013 and 2014, its warehouse management software helped it clinch the Best Warehouse Management Systems Provider award at the Asia Manufacturing Awards.

In 2020, its One Logon suite of services won the Logisym Best Supply Chain Software award. That year, Keyfields also won the

Enterprise 50 Award for the first time, and did so again in 2022.

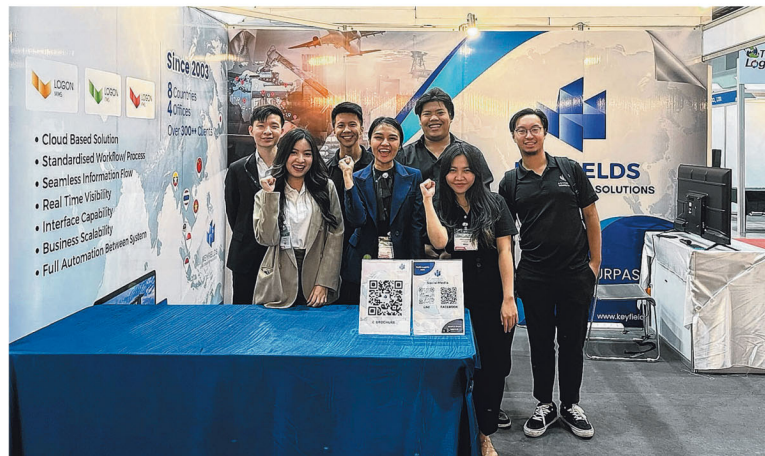
Keyfields aims to be attractive not just to clients, but also employees. Unlike MNCs, whose employees may have limited responsibilities, SMEs such as Keyfields can provide their employees with exposure to various departments, said Tan.

Employees get a broader perspective and are exposed to the different aspects of the business, which Tan believes is one of the reasons that they stay on. The management also aims to create a warm atmosphere at work, with events such as Chinese New Year dinners and Christmas lunches.

Bridging generational gaps

Beyond that, there is an active effort to bridge generational gaps. Keyfields employees are mostly millennials and Gen Z individuals, while the management are older. Both sides may have different mindsets and perceptions of work.

To bridge this gap, Keyfields takes a "management by objectives" approach: employees can work from home as long as they still complete their tasks on time. This flexible work arrangement has allowed employees to better manage their time, and has led to higher productivity.



The Keyfields team taking part in the international trade fair Tilog-Logistix Exhibition in Thailand, in August 2023. PHOTO: KEYFIELDS