

More effective communication methods

EMBEDDED Wireless Labs (EWL) was formed in 1997, the same year as MSC Malaysia. The company does exactly what their name says – embed wireless technology into devices that are not primarily designed to be wireless. EWL works with medical equipment on devices such as electrocardiograms for hospitals as well as on devices that are used in homes. It also builds telecommunications systems and devices such as 3G routers for SOHO.

EWL obtained MSC Malaysia status in 1997, one of the first companies to do so. “The incentives that come with MSC Malaysia status is what actually got us here,” reveals Kenneth Margon, the company’s director. “We considered many places, but it was the particular combination of lower costs, infrastructure and environment that made us decide

on Malaysia.”

BUSINESS FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

According to Margon, one of the necessities of working with wireless technology is the need to be in a business friendly environment, especially when it comes to testing frequencies and the likes. Many countries have issues with security and restrictions on the kinds of wireless devices and software companies are allowed to work on. Many of the devices and software that EWL uses are in fact restricted for export in the United States. “There are lots of things Malaysia has to offer that way,” says Margon.

EWL is a research and development company, and almost all its employees are engineers. “What we do is develop various products either with partners either within or outside of Malaysia,” explains Margon. “The product is branded with our partner’s brand and goes through their sales channel.” In some

cases the company develops a 3G platform with up to 15 different versions of the product and combine and build the versions in different formats for different customers.

Most of the company’s customers are telephone companies for whom EWL designs reference radio frequency products, which are basic devices on which the customer can demonstrate the use of a microchip or a system before the proper development of the product takes place. These are products such as kiosks for e-banking and the systems used to run and monitor them.

IMPROVING PROCESSES

EWL work process is one that continually finds ways to improve quality and efficiency so it jumped at the chance of self-improvement when MDeC invited some of its people to participate in the CDP Six Sigma. “Virtually everything we do has to be audited and tracked,” says Margon. “We ourselves want to know how



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well we operate as a business. We have added the processes we learned from Six Sigma as well as other programmes into the ways we collect information and feed it back into the organisation.”

“Our company is not a big one and every single person in their decision making makes a difference everyday,” he continues. “We depend on the people making good decisions. It is something people need to learn, and all of these CDP programmes help in their own way. For example, Sigma Six is about effective communication between groups and getting the right information and thinking about who your customers are, even if all this is just internally.”

Margon explains that as virtually everything the company does is auditable, it has to keep track of how well it is operating. The Sigma Six training has provided

them with the ability to efficiently collect information and feed it back into the organisation at every level. Once EWL added Six Sigma processes into the company, each employee has become more aware of the role he or she plays in the whole company and how the quality of the work they do everyday affects the final outcome of the bigger picture.

While it continues to work with larger companies and multinationals, EWL is starting to produce devices that have commercial potential and can be sold directly to the consumer. “It would be great to be a company like that,” says Margon. “We are also focusing on the overseas market. Now wireless technology is getting into everything and having the people who make the product which contain this technology would be really good. We have something to bring into the market.”



Kenneth Margon



Product development in the lab