Network Courier ramps up services with Rapido

By Lam Yi Fung, Yang Xu, Ye Keyu and Ye Ye

NETWORK Courier is shaking off its image as a traditional courier service provider, with the launch of its new smartphone-based booking and despatch platform, Rapido.

Launched in September 2017, it serves as a solution to the increasing demand for parcel delivery services in the face of accelerated growth in the e-commerce market.

In other words, it caters to the needs for professional last-mile fulfilment delivery services. VS Kumar, the founder of Network Courier & Rapido, explains: "Virtually every country has experienced double-digit growth in retail e-commerce sales. In particular, the market for e-commerce in Singapore is expected to be worth US$5.4 billion by 2025."

"The over-arching purpose of Rapido is to provide a seamless, technologically effective and affordable solution, which increases productivity and user experience for both the delivery fleet and the customers."

This is expected to be achieved through the new mobile app Rapido – a platform with an "uberised" crowd-sourcing concept towards order fulfilment.

Rapido, meaning "rapid" in Italian, connects customers with a network of hundreds of drivers for same-day, on-demand delivery across the island. The delivery process is automated and streamlined through e-booking of courier services, e-tracking of delivery status, e-invoicing and payment.

With more than 28 years of experience in courier services, Network Courier has developed an in-depth understanding of the delivery process and customers' needs. Leveraging on this expertise, Rapido has unique features that make delivery easier, faster and safer. For instance, the app provides customers with the most updated status of the delivery job by giving instant confirmation of job acceptance and notification upon delivery completion. Users of the app can even track the location of their consignments in real time. Designed
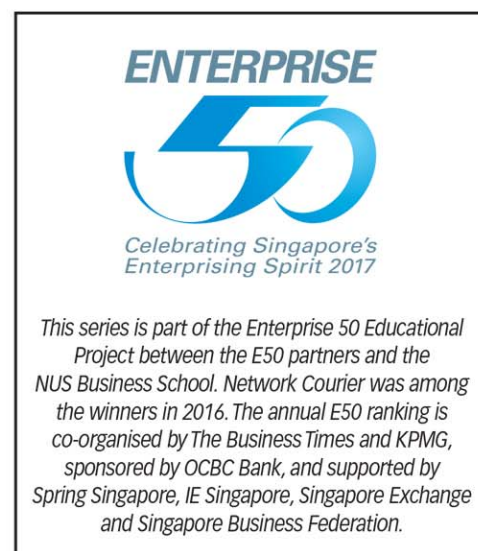
with push notifications, the app provides fast and instant prompts to both drivers and customers. Registered drivers within delivery zones are notified immediately and provided with accurate and updated navigation to ensure smooth traffic on the way. Rapido is supported by Network Courier's in-house IT system, which is able to respond quickly to any IT related problems. Furthermore, Second Factor Authentication (2FA) method enhances drivers' account security when a password reset is requested.

Redefining courier services after 27 years

Unlike traditional parcel delivery, Rapido effectively eliminates human errors such as miscommunication because the delivery order is clearer and more precise. Productivity is increased as there is no need for a third party to relay information. Any late changes of order will be immediately reflected in the system to allow quick response.

The introduction of Rapido is a reflection of how far Network Courier has come in the courier service industry. From humble origins, Mr Kumar started his courier service career as a despatch boy and quickly moved up the ranks to be an operations manager. Subsequently, he initiated a courier service partnership but left soon after to establish Network Courier in 1990 with a vision to bring courier services in Singapore to greater heights.

From a small startup with just 10 employees, Network Courier has become one of Singapore's leading courier service providers with about 180 employees. Its services now extend to different parts of the world with about 15,000 deliveries daily, covering a wide range of customers, including trading companies, financial institutions, freight and logistics and e-commerce players.

Over the past 20 years, Network Courier has received numerous awards for its excellent services. For instance, the Singapore Prestige Brand Award was conferred on Network Courier for three consecutive years from 2008 in recognition of its outstanding brand development. It also received the Asean Business Award for its remarkable employee retention and development in 2009. The Enterprises 50 Award in 2016 was a manifestation of its true enterprise spirit in its competitive marketplace.

The company has consistently aspired to stay at the frontier of technology. A salient example is its IT system, Virtual Client, which includes an SMS gateway to route job instructions directly to the courier staff and time entry devices such as the biometric finger and vascular scanners.

A differentiating factor of Network Courier is its family-oriented company culture, which explains its exemplary staff retention ratio. More than 80 per cent of its staff have worked for Network Courier for more than three years, and more than 35 per cent have been with the company for more than 10 years.

Mr Kumar says that there has been much interest in Network Courier's offerings. According to him, prospects from Malaysia, India and even UK have sought to engage Rapido for their last mile fulfilment requirements to end-consumers.

Looking forward, Rapido aims to achieve 2,000

deliveries a day within the first year of operation. Its goal is to give customers a cost e?ective yet reliable and professional delivery service without the conventional hassles. With its timely investment in technology, Network Courier seeks to improve its efficiency to benefit all its stakeholders.

Mr Kumar says his future goal is for the company to be the "one of the top courier service providers in Asean and beyond".

∎ The writers are students from NUS Business School

VS Kumar (centre), founder of Network Courier and Rapido. The app gives the most updated status of last-mile deliveries. Users can even track the location of consignments in real time.

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