



Mr V.S. Kumar (centre) with system administrator Tamil Selvan and operations supervisor Allen Koo in the Electronic Data Processing room, where high-end servers are stored and software such as the Virtual Client system is managed. The system can route job instructions directly to courier staff and has time-entry devices such as biometric finger and vascular scanners. BT FILE PHOTO

### SMESpotlight

# Delivery firm gets rapid boost, thanks to new mobile app

This article is part of the Enterprise 50 Educational Project between E50 partners and NUS Business School. Network Courier was among the winners last year. The annual E50 ranking is co-organised by The Business Times and KPMG, sponsored by OCBC Bank, and supported by Spring Singapore, IE Singapore, Singapore Exchange and the Singapore Business Federation.

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

Launched in September, 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 need for professional last-mile fulfilment delivery services.

Mr V.S. Kumar, the founder of Network Courier and 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 (S\$7.4 billion) by 2025.

"The overarching 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 new mobile app Rapido – a platform with an "Uber-ised" crowdsourcing concept towards order fulfilment.

Rapido, meaning "rapid" in Ital-

ian, 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 also 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 journey. Rapido is supported by Network Courier's in-house IT system, which is able to respond

quickly to any IT-related problems. Furthermore, a two-factor authentication method enhances drivers' account security when a password reset is requested.

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 last-minute changes will immediately be reflected in the system.

The introduction of Rapido is a reflection of how far Network Courier has come in the industry.

Mr Kumar started his courier service career as a dispatch boy and quickly moved up the ranks to become 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 start-up 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, such as trading companies, financial institutions, freight and logistics, and e-commerce players.

Over the past 20 years, Network Courier has received numerous awards. It was awarded the Singapore Prestige Brand Award for three consecutive years from 2008 in recognition of its outstanding brand development. It also received the Asean Business Award in

2009 for its employee retention and development. The Enterprise 50 Award last year was a manifestation of its true enterprise spirit in a competitive marketplace.

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

What sets Network Courier apart is its family-oriented company culture, which explains its exemplary staff retention ratio. More than 80 per cent of its staff have worked at 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 there has been much interest in Network Courier's offerings. According to him, prospects from Malaysia, India and even Britain 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 its first year of operation. Its goal is to give customers a cost-effective yet reliable and professional delivery service without the conventional hassle. With its timely investment in technology, Network Courier seeks to improve its efficiency to benefit its stakeholders.

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

• The writers are students from NUS Business School. This article first appeared in *The Business Times*.