

GLOBAL HUB FOR INNOVATION

Greater KL powering PPG's success

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AS Malaysia's digital and technology market surged in 2017, PPG strategically positioned itself to leverage this momentum, aiming to bolster its market presence through innovative digital solutions.

PPG is a US\$18.2 billion Pittsburgh, United States-based paints, coatings and specialty chemicals company and one of the largest in the world.

PPG's manufacturing facility in Petaling Jaya was incorporated on Nov 5, 1996.

This was further exemplified by PPG's investment in its Malaysia Global Technology Centre in 2018.

Since then, the technological hub has grown from 25 information technology (IT) professionals of Oracle and systems, applications and products (SAP) to more than 160 employees across different IT functions.

PPG chief information officer Bhaskar Ramachandran anticipates robust growth ahead for the Malaysia Global Technology Centre and for it to become a global hub for innovation and expertise.

"With strategic focus on data analytics, artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, SAP, infrastructure and cloud development, we envision expanded investment and heightened growth opportunities.

"Looking beyond Asia Pacific, which currently contributes 16 per cent to our global revenue, we eagerly look at Kuala Lumpur to support our different businesses across the globe, driving transformative solutions and fostering in-

ternational collaboration," he said.

According to Bhaskar, PPG's data analytics centre of excellence handles data from major enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems like Oracle, SAP and QAD, while the SAP centre of excellence continues to expand with teams across operations, basis, development, integration and testing.

He said that through collaborative efforts with the company's digital centre of excellence's research and development, the science and technology centre of excellence continued to leverage AI and machine learning tools to standardise colour formulations and connect PPG laboratories across its global platforms using its range of colour tool software.

"Our telecommunication, networking and global service desk teams, under the Infrastructure centre of excellence, are continuously working towards network modernisation, automation development and cloud-only strategy.

"While PPG's IT security and compliance play a pivotal role in safeguarding our assets and information by assessing current cybersecurity trends, we optimise risks and compliance through our investments in hybrid cloud protection, asset and data protection as well as identity management," he added.

InvestKL chief executive officer Datuk Muhammad Azmi Zulkifli said: "Greater KL has emerged as a beacon of innovation and collaboration, providing fertile ground for the expansion and transformative endeavours of global corporations like PPG. With a focused strategy aimed at nurturing innovation and cultivating a dynamic business



PPG's success is built on a strong foundation of two segments: performance coatings and industrial coatings.

ecosystem, PPG's presence in Greater KL, notably its global technology centre, serves as evidence of the region's capacity to catalyse transformative solutions and facilitate international collaboration.

"Through harnessing the capabilities of data analytics, AI and machine learning, Greater KL rises not just as a regional hub but also as a global epicentre of innovation and technology."

Bhaskar said PPG, with a mission to protect and beautify the world, had always prioritised sustainability in its business.

He said the company's dedicated sustainability organisation focused on advancing environmental, social and governance (ESG) goals.

"After an assessment in 2022, we have set 2030 ESG targets. Currently, 39 per cent of our sales come from sustainably advantaged products, and we're committed to reaching 50 per cent sales from such products by 2030.

"Looking ahead, PPG's products aim to contribute to a more sustainable future by extending the useable lifespan of bridges and buildings, reducing energy use and greenhouse gas emissions by eliminating curing stages in automotive coatings and sealants, enabling infinitely recyclable aluminium food and beverage packaging, and even improving the fuel efficiency for airplanes and cargo ships.

"PPG, in collaboration with the PPG Foundation, remains committed to community efforts in advancing education, delivering community sustainability and encouraging employee volunteerism," he said.

Bhaskar said PPG had completed more than 500 projects in 50 countries since 2015, through initiatives such as the global "COLORFUL COMMUNITIES®" that aimed to brighten community spaces.

Closer to home in Malaysia,



PPG employees coming together to complete a colourful and transformative makeover at Pusat Pemulihan Dalam Komuniti in Kuala Kubu Baru, as part of the company's 'COLORFUL COMMUNITIES®' programme.

Bhaskar said PPG had just transformed Pusat Pemulihan Dalam Komuniti in Kuala Kubu Baru.

He noted that as part of its educational goals to build the next generation of diverse and innovative science, technology, engineering and mathematics leaders, the company had partnered with 42KL, an educational subsidiary of Sunway Educational Group.

42KL, now expanded to 42Malaysia, aims to deliver educational opportunities to individuals residing in Malaysia regardless of socioeconomic status and educational background.

PPG has pledged an initial grant of RM150,000 and continues to engage with 42Malaysia to support the pioneering development in technological education.

PPG, incorporated in 1883, operates primarily in two segments, namely performance coatings and industrial coatings.

For more than 140 years, the company has been dedicated to developing and delivering paints, coatings and specialty materials that have earned the trust of its customers.

Like most global businesses, PPG explored regional strategic flexibil-

ities to streamline operations, leading to the creation of the Malaysia Asia Pacific shared service centre.

Partnering with government agencies like InvestKL, PPG's shared service centre, which initially focused on finance, now handles multiple functions including finance, human resources, IT, master data, security, procurement and supply chain.

The shared service centre employs more than 400 diverse professionals, and PPG believes that its greatest strength lies in the diversity of its people.

Bhaskar said the company prioritised their wellbeing by ensuring they were safe, healthy, engaged and valued by continuously delivering improvements on its 2025 targets on diversity, equity and inclusion.

This includes a commitment to achieve 34 per cent to 36 per cent representation of global female professionals and total global employee resource network and diversity, equity and inclusion capability-building participation of 50 per cent by 2025.

In addition, PPG has almost 55,000 courses currently available for all employees.