

# Providing engineered fastener solutions

**Staytite Ltd is a fastener supplier that has been providing high-quality products and reliable solutions to customers for over 35 years. Will Lowry visited the headquarters in High Wycombe, UK, to find out how its multi-pronged approach enables it to deliver a complete service.**

Established in 1978, Staytite was originally focused on a single product – the Staytite Nut – a one-piece metal locking nut that was designed in Japan. “For the first five years we simply focused on the Staytite Nut and building the brand,” explains David Cartledge, director of sales at Staytite. “After this we started to look at other product ranges that added value for customers, such as Carp nuts and Barb nuts. We then introduced a complementary range of SEMS, for which we are still the largest UK stockist – both to distributors and end users.”

Initially Staytite predominately grew in the distributor market, which accounted for 60% – 70% of sales. “In the early days importing was a ‘dark art’ and was something that we excelled at,” says David. “However, the internet made it a lot easier for companies to import products and the market started to become a lot more competitive. To ensure that the company continued to move forward and grow, we decided to diversify and start to focus on also supplying engineered solutions to the end user market.”

Today, the distributor market only accounts for 30% of Staytite’s sales – with the remainder direct to end users. “We are still very committed to supplying distributors and we are still hitting the same sales values for the distributor market as we were ten years ago,” points out David. “We have simply been growing faster in the end user market.”

During the time Staytite was establishing and growing in the end user market, it also took the opportunity to acquire Andover-based Portafix Ltd in 2008 – a ‘one stop shop’ for a wide range of fastener products for end users.

“Portafix was originally a customer of ours and we saw the potential within the

business,” mentions David. “They were a solid company that had a good catchment area for big potential customers. We thought we could learn something from them and how they operate, and they could benefit from the added value and the stability to grow we could provide.”

Since the acquisition, Portafix has operated as an autonomous company and gone from strength to strength. “Andy Emerson, the managing director at Portafix, has done a remarkable job,” comments David. “Due to the rate at which Portafix has grown we have found it difficult to find a site that we can build on that is good for today, for three years time and for ten years time. Now we have finally found a site, so the company can continue its growth strategy.”

Portafix’s close proximity to customers and its ability to respond quickly and efficiently to enquiries is something that David believes is proving popular with customers. “There has definitely been a ‘groundswell’ for the market to go back to how it stood 10 to 15 years ago – where suppliers were close to their customers. It gives you the opportunity to respond decisively to customer’s needs and – from the success at Portafix – we have seen how much of an advantage it can be.”

The philosophy of being near to its customers was an important element in Staytite establishing a Hong Kong distribution centre in 2008. “The warehouse in Hong Kong has enabled us to stay close to our key end user customers in Asia and

make sure that we are providing them with a first class service,” explains David.

The centre is managed from the UK with Mandarin speaking staff ensuring that there is the correct paper trail for every order. Once an order is taken in the UK, a picking note can be printed out in the Hong Kong facility and the order can be picked. A logistics partner then guarantees that the products are shipped across Asia quickly and effectively.

“It is a very controlled operation and we have set criteria on minimum orders and spend,” comments David. “We have gradually picked up customers and there is the potential for further growth over the next couple of years. We are very excited about the opportunities that lie ahead.”

As well as its developments in Asia, Staytite is also looking to further strengthen its team in the UK. The company has now established a business development team, as well as a customer service team, and has also recently added new buyers to the company. “Over the past twelve months we have looked to grow the experience we already have in the team, to make sure that we are ready to take on new work and continue providing a first class service to the customer,” says David.

Staytite has also looked to strengthen its quality department, with new personnel enabling the business to



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measure its suppliers in greater detail. “By expanding our quality department we are able to have better dialogue with our suppliers,” comments David. “We choose suppliers based on the quality of service and product they can provide, and through the quality department we are able to guarantee that the high standards we demand are maintained. If there are any production issues we are also able to work with them and solve any concerns.”

rather than a fastener logistics company,” states David. “We have always had a strong technical ethos running through the company, and we like nothing more than providing value added services and products.”

Through its technical department Staytite works with customers on applications and suggests products that can offer significant benefits. “Ultimately we are looking to provide the customer

explains Andy. “We want to encourage customers to look at the fasteners they are using and ask, is this the right fastener for the application? Could I be using something better?”

Staytite has over 4,000 industrial fasteners, which are made to the highest quality and include leading brands such as the Staytite Nut, Hardlock Nut, Stayloc Nut and Stayplas 30 – all available in a variety of sizes, finishes and materials.

“Our range of products means that we are able to offer a solution to almost every application,” states Andy. “Where we do not have a product that is suitable, we have the ability to offer a custom-made service for bespoke fastener applications.”

David adds: “We can also offer advice on cost reduction measures such as product realisation, partnership sourcing, stock management systems, and alternative supply methods, which can enable customers to further reduce their production times and costs.”

Through working with its customers and continuing to use its multi-pronged approach of supplying the distributor and end user markets, Staytite is confident of staying ahead of the market and providing quality products that offer real solutions.

“Through targeting key new customers, and increasing the product portfolio to existing customers, we will look to further strengthen our leading position within the distributor market – as well as continue to grow our end user business,” says David. “Our Hong Kong distribution centre will enable us to target UK or European companies with Asian operations and – by using the experience and knowledge within the company – we will continue to provide a unique service to all of our customers and continue to grow our reputation as a reliable supplier of high-quality products.”



David continues: “When it comes to quality, the level of customer expectations is higher than they have ever been. Customers now want to see the paper trail and documentation to show the quality procedures that we carry out, which is why we have strict procedures in place to record that data and to share it with our customers.”

Another department that plays a critical role within Staytite is the technical division. “We are still fundamentally an engineering fastener-based company,

with something different to what they are currently using, which can provide either reliability or commercial benefits – or even both,” says Andy Giddings, technical manager at Staytite. “Whilst customers have the knowledge of the application, they don’t necessarily know what is the best fastener to use. That is where we come in.”

“It is about looking at the entire package and coming up with a better solution, which gives customers the quality and consistency they need,”