



NEW ERA: S4 Integration founder and managing director Vaughn Fulton, left, celebrated the launch of the new state-of-the-art facilities in Port Elizabeth along with managing director of Germany-based investor and partner company DSA, Dr Eckhard Schultz, and S4 general manager Andrew White. Behind them is the new facility in Fairview

New home for automation experts

S4 moves into Fairview and plans to expand its motor industry focus to other sectors

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HAVING spent more than 20 years cutting its teeth in automotive systems, Port Elizabeth's S4 Integration has entered a new era with the inauguration of the company's R30-million offices and manufacturing facility in the Fairview light industrial node.

The company, which boasts national and international customers and can name renowned supercar brands such as Porsche and Ferrari among its clients, launched the state-of-the-art facility at the end of last month.

Starting with a handful of employees in 1994, the company now employs 170 people and operates supporting offices in Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg. It also enjoys an international presence.

S4, which stands for Systems Solutions Services Support, are assembly line specialists with extensive experience and skills in automation, mechanical, electrical, software and IT applications.

The company focuses on systems specification development, electrical and mechanical design and electrical and mechanical fabrication, along with project management and after-sales support.

And locally, alongside other industries such as the pharmaceutical sector with Aspen being one example, S4 serves a range of vehicle manufacturers which include Volkswagen, Ford, Isuzu and Mercedes-Benz.

More recently, a 30% shareholding in S4 by Germany's vehicle diagnostics specialists DSA (Diagnostics Systems Applications), has enabled the company to set its sights on projects which will emerge from the multibillion-rand Chinese investment into a new BAIC vehicle plant at Coega.

"Proximity to our customers was not the main consideration for the location

of the new facility," S4 founder and managing director Vaughn Fulton said.

"It was our staff and the quality of the work environment we would like them to function in.

"We have a large software development team and they are not keen to work in an industrial environment.

"We therefore wanted to create the kind of environment which attracts the best in the industry and retains them.

"Through DSA our software development team develops custom-made software solutions for the international market."

Fulton said that the company was now looking to expand into other industries.

S4 general manager Andrew White said while the company's core experience and competencies lay in the automotive sector, S4 was exploring participation in new industries.

"We are focused on the manufacturing environment and will continue to do so, but we are looking at other sectors," he said.

"At the moment we have projects around electrical meters and locks which are examples of other industries we are looking into.

"Clients don't want half a solution so our competencies range from simple stand-alone installations to the manufacture of complex turnkey production line systems for a diverse range of applications.

"We have the ability to handle the entire process of projects internally – from concept to design, manufacturing, installation and after-sales support."

The company started its commercial life in 1994 as Man Machine Dynamics and was renamed S4 in 1996.

DSA – which gives S4 a foothold into international markets – gained its shareholding in S4 in 2008, which was followed by S4's acquisition of Mosmech Engineering in 2012.

This brought mechanical engineering competencies to the company.

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