EXCELLENCE IN EXPORTING
AVTECH SOFTWARE INC.

FLEXIBLE TEAM: Richard Grundy, left, president and chief operating officer for AVTECH Software Inc. in Warren, speaks with Jonathan Foltz, fulfillment manager. Grundy said the COVID-19 pandemic allowed AVTECH to reimagine a more agile team structure, which helped it prevent downtime.

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Room Alert sales outside U.S. keep AVTECH on its toes

BY JENNIFER L. GRYBOWSKI | Contributing Writer

WHILE THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC posed a challenge for most companies in 2020, **AVTECH Software Inc.** was well-prepared for an emergency and has seen business increase over the past year.

"Our focus is about business continuity and resilience, and never has that been more important than in the aftermath of COVID-19," President and Chief Operating Officer Richard Grundy said. "We were in a unique position to provide the capability to prevent downtime."

AVTECH is a Warren-based computer hardware and software developer and manufacturer. The company's Room Alert products proactively monitor critical facilities and assets for conditions such as temperature, humidity, power, leaks, smoke/fire, air flow, room entry, motion, cameras and more. Room Alert is in use in more than 185 countries and can be found in over 80% of Fortune 1000 companies, as well as most state and federal agencies and all branches of the U.S. military.

"We didn't lose any productivity," Marketing and Channel Communications Manager Russell Benoit said, referring to AVTECH's pandemic response. "We knew we could work from home; we knew we'd be able to keep going. A lot of our customers weren't able to do that."

Grundy said AVTECH heard from customers who left their offices, leaving no one to monitor the buildings. If something went wrong, it would slow down or stop business.

"Historically, customers may have looked at our products as nice-to-haves," Grundy said. "We had the same challenges with no one being in our building, so we started to use our own products to prove ourselves and give a greater visibility to conditions that could cause our business to be negatively impacted."

AVTECH decided to provide the highest level of product access to its customers free for six months, which included the ability to get advanced alert customized messages and collaborate with team members. The company also published a business continuity checklist so customers could plan to protect their assets.

"We were not only protecting our business but trying to be compassionate to our customers and provide them with the tools they need," Grundy said.

The response from the customers was overwhelming.

"We had customers emailing and calling to say thank you and tell us how much they loved having access to these tools," Benoit said.

Once things started to stabilize and companies started to settle into remote work, AVTECH started to see business bounce back.

"More businesses started to take the approach of continuity and resilience planning and planning for the unexpected, and our products fit that mold very well," Grundy said. "We are fortunate to be in a position of being in tech that provides customers with the opportunity to have better awareness and protect their business and make them more resilient, and that resonated during COVID-19."

AVTECH has become a leader in the Rhode Island exporting community during its 30-plus-year tenure. But its international business has seen exponential growth in the past year.

"The strong relationships we've built with our vendors that sell for us overseas are leading the charge about getting the word out about what we can do for customers," Benoit said.

AVTECH has manufacturing facilities in Rhode Island and Pennsylvania, an international sales office in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and an international distribution facility in Shannon, Ireland. In 2020, sales outside of North America grew by 70% compared with 2019, mainly due to AVTECH's ability to deliver Room Alert quickly and much more affordably since products are shipping from the European Union instead of Rhode Island.

"We can reach our customers in ways most convenient for them better than our competition," Grundy said. "The pandemic has allowed us to reimagine a more agile team structure and we will continue to try and leverage the most advantageous tools and adaptations. To start 2021 seeing incredible growth in all corners of the world as businesses come back to work and people recover … we are proud to be able to have the reach in the world to provide these services." ∎

AVTECH

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RICHARD GRUNDY, AVTECH Software Inc. president and chief operating officer