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WE MEAN
BUSINESS.**

Priority 1 Driving Economic Growth

ROBOTICS PLUS

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THE BACKGROUND

Robotics Plus is a technology company that develops mechanisation, automation, robotic and sensor technologies to achieve new levels of productivity in the horticulture industry. For the last five years, they have been developing world-first innovations including a robotic apple packer, kiwifruit pollination system and multi-purpose orchard robotic vehicle.

THE CHALLENGE

Back in 2008, Steve Saunders, CEO of Plus Group Horticulture and a well-established entrepreneur in the ag-tech space, had the foresight to recognise the burgeoning issues horticulture would soon face around labour shortages. "I recognised the challenge, but also the opportunity - to provide robotic solutions to address the global challenges in the horticulture industry." To achieve his vision, Steve established a partnership with Alistair Scarfe, a passionate engineer with a PhD in Industrial Automation.

THE SOLUTION

In 2013, Steve and Alistair established Robotics Plus at Newnham Park, the Bay of Plenty's agricultural business park featuring several innovation focused businesses. Alistair Scarfe, now CTO and Director of Robotics Plus explained, "It never crossed our minds to establish the business anywhere else. The Bay is a great outdoor lab with a humming

horticulture industry. Being next door to the orchards and growers means we are able to test and learn quickly which is vital when you are carrying out complex innovation."

Another major advantage was attracting great talent. Alistair explained, "Talent is fundamental to our business - we simply wouldn't be able to carry out this level of innovation without great people. We can recruit COOs, CEOs, high skilled engineers and technicians, who are drawn by the Bay's innovation ecosystem and lifestyle."

The team cite the support from Priority One as being fundamental to their success. Steve explained, "As an organisation Priority One embrace innovation - even from an early stage, they helped us raise our profile and attract lots of attention. Whether that be through involving us in events, organising visits from stakeholders or promoting us through their network."

THE FUTURE

Robotics Plus have recently taken investment from one of the world's leading robotics businesses - Japanese multi-national Yamaha. Steve explained, "It has always been my focus to show that we can develop great technology in Tauranga which attracts multi-national brands into the region. Yamaha recognises we are leaders in the robotics horticultural space - we are really excited about the possibilities of the partnership."

#1
IN AGRI
ROBOTICS

15
APPLE
PACKERS
SOLD
WORLDWIDE IN 2018

30+
TEAM
ROBOTICS EXPERTS

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