

Prospects warming up for family behind smart approach to hot air

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THE NATION

SIBLINGS Atchara and Apichat Poomee saw enough potential in an innovative method of using the hot air generated by air conditioners to power water heaters that they separated the emerging business from the main family enterprise.

They established Pac Corporation (Thailand) Co Ltd in 2016 to enable a clearer focus on their plans to develop water heaters that make use of air-conditioning systems. That decision has paid off, with their product, Pac Frenergy, generating sales of Bt70 million a year. And the pair have also had success with exports of the innovative system.

"After I graduated with a bachelor's degree in marketing from Kasetsart University, I started out in my career as an employee in a business for about one year," Atchara, 39, the company's managing director, said in an interview with *The Nation* recently.

"Then I decided to work in my family's business, which is engaged in setting up air-conditioning systems and had found a way to heat the recovery water for a heating system, too."

After she began working in the family business, Atchara and her younger brother Apichat, who is the company's business development director, hit on the idea of separating the business lines in 2016 so that they could concentrate on research and development for the water heaters that make use of the hot air from air conditioners.

"My family business took a long time to develop the technology that underpins the use of the hot air from air conditioners for water heaters," Atchara said. "Then my brother and I decided to set up our business to focus on creating innovative products with this novel use of the hot air that would otherwise go to waste."

"We set about designing such products that match the demands of customers, especially those in the commercial market, such as hotels and resorts."

Atchara lays the credit for the clever

Profile

Company: Pac Corporation (Thailand) Co Ltd
Business type: Produces heat recovery water heaters
Sales value: Bt70 million a year
Staff: 40

application of the hot air from air conditioners to spawn a new product line with her brother, who designed the water heater. Apichaht, 36, graduated with a bachelor's degree in engineering from King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang.

The water heating system, drawing on the otherwise wasted heat generated by air conditioners, achieves energy savings on two fronts: a 100 per cent reduction in electricity costs from the water heater and a reduction of up to 20 per cent on the air conditioners, Atchara said.

With the pair's initial success, they have gained intellectual property rights from the Commerce Ministry for the innovation, identified by its full name as PAC Frenergy Heat Recovery Water Heater.

The product was shown off at the Gef Unido Cleantech Innovation Programme for SMEs in Thailand

The Nation Apr 21, 2018

event, which saw those entrepreneurs with outstanding innovations present their products at the Cleantech Open Global Forum in San Francisco, in the United States, last year.

The pair's product also won an award in the category of energy saving in corporate applications at the Thailand Green Design awards 2018, which was conducted by Kasetsart University's Agricultural and Agro-Industrial Product Improvement Institute (KAPI).

"When we got award, that helped us to promote our product and it also served as a guarantee by experts that our product was environmentally friendly," Atchara said. Such recognition is helping the company to sell the product overseas, including in the Maldives, Africa, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam.

The company's product line now encompasses the Pac Frenergy heat recovery water heater; the Pac Pooltemper, which is an energy-saving pool temperature controller for cooling and heating the water, and Pac Heat Pump, a high-temperature water heater for large volume of water.

"All of our products focus on innovation that comes from research and develop undertaken by us. This will help us to achieve sustainable growth for long term as we are reliant on own technology. This is the best way for us to proceed," Atchara said.

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Atchara Poomee, managing director of Pac Corporation (Thailand) Co Ltd, and her brother Apichat Poomee, the company's business development director, with their Pac Frenergy heat recovery water heater. Exports are boosting their sales.