

Dishes in Focus

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Entrance to Azure Shine's production facility. All of the various sized antennas produced by Azure Shine can be seen to the left.

Allen Shen started his satellite dish manufacturing company Azure Shine back in 1988 with 15 employees. He already had experience in the manufacture of satellite antennas: he had previously worked for a dish maker that primarily made wire mesh antennas. But Allen Shen saw the interest in smaller dishes beginning to grow and began his company by producing offset antennas that were 45, 55, 60 and 75cm in size and all exported to Germany and the UK at a rate of 10,000 per month. This number has increased steadily over the years and has now reached a half million per month. Azure Shine is clearly a market leader among satellite dish manufacturers. The company's headquarters is located in the Bade district of the city of Taoyuan west of Taipei/Taiwan. Taipei's international airport is also located in Taoyuan making Azure Shine's location strategically convenient.



Allen Shen is Azure Shine's General Manager. The small pin on his lapel identifies him as a Rotary member.



Executive Engineer Bennett Lin shows the geographical distribution on the board: 35% of Azure Shine's antennas go to North and South America, 33% are exported to Asia, 14% go to Europe, 10% to Africa and 8% to Australia.

Allen Shen explains: "Up until 1991, we manufactured our antennas out of fiberglass, after that we switched over to metal." The main reason for this was increasing price pressure; metal is cheaper than fiberglass. "Recycling also plays a role", comments Allen Shen, "metal is much more ecologically friendly compared to fiberglass."

Who are Azure Shine's customers? "60% of our production is geared towards OEM products while the remaining 40% is sold partly as OEM and partly under our own name to

distributors." Today Azure Shine employs 150 people of which eight belong to the Sales team. You will also bump into Azure Shine at trade shows. Marketing Executive Lilyen Yu explains their show plans: "We have our own stands at CSTB in Moscow, ANGA in Cologne and CABSAT in Dubai." They are also looking at coming to the USA but at this point it has not been decided which trade show they will take part in.

The Research and Development Team is rather large: 20 employees are constantly



The pressing machine: the precut sheet metal (on the pallet in the foreground) is placed flat in the pressing machine and comes back out as an offset antenna.

working on product improvements. So many R&D employees? Executive Engineer Bernett Lin describes what all these R&D employees do: "We are expanding our product palette to include VSAT antennas; an application with extremely high requirements." It all starts with a much more precise handling of the antenna surface and goes so far as producing the exact matching feed and OMT for the VSAT dish. VSAT deals with the active transmission of signals and testing includes showing, for example, that a transmitted signal actually reaches a satellite and doesn't get scattered into space because of an imprecisely installed component on the antenna.

Allen Shen adds, "Our VSAT products will reach the market by the end of April 2007. We will have uplink antennas in 75, 90, 120, 150 and 180cm sizes available." He then let us in on a little surprise: "We've just developed a totally new 3-meter antenna and production on this dish has just started."

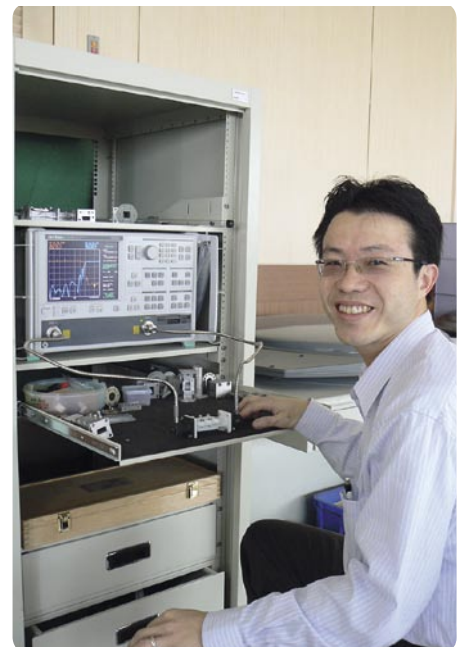
Allen Shen gave us an impish smile and then revealed another secret: "We are also developing a mobile antenna that will have the name "Fly Away Dish Antenna" and be 45cm in diameter." We noticed that Allen Shen still had that grin on his face so we expected even more.

And we were not disappointed: "It will have an integrated GPS receiver!" The antenna will "know" where it is on the Earth and will be able to automatically point itself to the correct satellites. "This mobile antenna won't be available until 2008", he tells us, slightly taking the wind out of our sails.

Azure Shine has committed itself to the Ku-band even though the larger dishes could be used for the C-band. But what about the Ka-band? Sure enough, "in September 2007 we will offer Ka-band antennas with OMT and feed in 60, 75, 80 and 90cm sizes", explains Bernett Lin. Azure Shine appears to have covered every possible application; they are a company that has focused all of their energy on satellite antennas!

Allen Shen also allows himself some time at work for a rather lucrative hobby while making a cup of tea: Azure Shine also manufactures water dispensers that keep water cold as well as hot. Having clean drinking water available at various temperatures is something that is appreciated by many companies as well as their employees.

Allen Shen then takes a sip of his tea made with hot water from his Azure Shine produced device. Only in Taiwan!



An R&D employee takes measurements on an OMT sample. VSAT antennas are manufactured complete with OMT and feed.



The R&D Team at work



The Sales Team at work