

BRIEFS

MANUFACTURERS

Pathfinder Systems marks partner Tiger Machine's seven decades

Michigan-based Pathfinder Systems is recognizing 70 years in operation for longtime manufacturing and technology development partner Tiger Machine of Okayama, Japan. Once established in its charter farm implement sales, servicing and repair business, Tiger Machine branched into concrete in the early 1960s, developing the country's first mixer and hydraulic block making equipment.

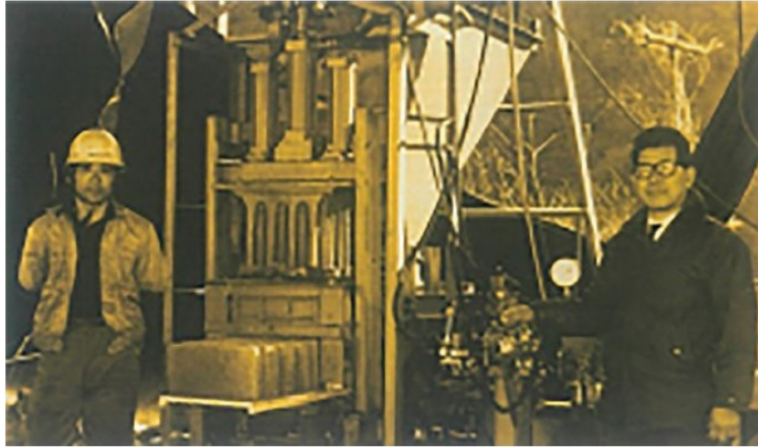
As demand for its block making machinery took hold in the next decade, the manufacturer expanded beyond its initial Okayama facility and entered licensed concrete product equipment. In 1979, it greatly increased block plant offerings by acquiring the ABC Product Handling and Curing System from BECO Co. in Phoenix, Ariz.

Into the 1990s, Tiger Machine developed early models of its flagship PS Series concrete paving stone machines—robust, flexible and equal to meeting the needs of an emerging high volume segment for unit masonry. A 1998 partnership with Pathfinder Systems' Larry Hilldore enabled the manufacturer to build a footprint in North America, one of the world's fastest growing markets for hardscapes.

PS Series evolution for North American and overseas operations has yielded machines with one- or three-minute mold change and one-minute height change cycles, along the capability of consistently molding low to high height products. Tiger Machine's Stationary Rack and Transfer or Finger Cars operate in first in, first out mode, allowing producers to keep track of curing units by size, style and color. The company has also developed special palletizing and splitting lines that eliminate traditional bottlenecks; equip PS models to operate at up to 20 percent faster than comparable equipment; and, afford operators new handling and cubing efficiency and patterning options.



Tetsugoro Kitahara (left), son of Tiger Machine founder, and Pathfinder Systems chief Larry Hilldore.



Tiger founder Yutaka Kitahara (top, right) applied farm machinery production competencies to concrete block equipment in 1963. Evolution of block and paving stone models, plus companion unit handling and finishing equipment, have positioned the manufacturer among global concrete masonry machinery brands. Current offerings include the Tiger Model S-3, seen here, with Sam Lock, Regional Operations Manager, Midwest Block during a visit of the Tiger facility in Japan.

