



B-TECH AV MOUNTS

50 YEARS

EST. 1972

B-TECH AV MOUNTS

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS: A BRIEF HISTORY OF B-TECH

EST. 1972



As featured in B-Tech's
2022 Full Line Catalogue
Available Now!



By Matt Bennett, Chairman & CEO of the B-Tech International Group

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF B-TECH

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS



Today, B-Tech is an award-winning AV Mounting Solutions industry innovator with a truly global presence. However, it all started from very humble beginnings in 1972, 50 years ago. My father, Martin Bennett, is a true entrepreneur. Having set up initially as a 'man with a van' in South London, focused on door-to-door selling of AV components, he later evolved the business into an original design manufacturer of audio and video accessories. These ranged from sourcing control switches to mounting brackets for televisions, projectors and loudspeakers. And all of this was without a formal engineering background. I joined B-Tech in 1998, and following my father's retirement a decade later, I have tried to carry on his good work in spreading the B-Tech name and its products. If you can spare a few minutes, I would like to give you a brief history of B-Tech so you can see how far a man with a van can go in 50 years...

FOUNDER MARTIN BENNETT - 1972



1972
M.P.B AUDIO LTD
Established

Relocates to premises with small warehouse facilities in West Croydon
Starts supplying & distributing Audio & Video cables

Begins using B-Tech as a brand name
Launch of BT1 Tilt & Swivel Speaker Mount

1980s

Trading name changed to Supreme Audio Services (SAS)
Launch of BT21 Scart Control

Acquisition of Lennard Developments
Launch of BT26 Pre-Amp

Supreme Audio Services becomes B-Tech Ltd.
Launch of BT16 16" CRT TV Mount

1990s

New larger office & warehouse opens in New Addington, Croydon
Launch of BT77 Side Clamping Speaker Mount

B-Tech Ltd. becomes B-Tech International Ltd.
Sales start to increase in Europe and North America

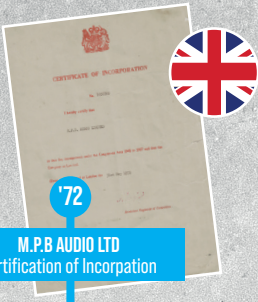
New European distributors appointed
Increased exposure at international exhibitions



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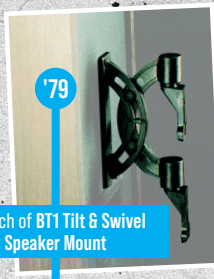
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'72
M.P.B AUDIO LTD
Certification of Incorporation



'72
M.P.B AUDIO LTD based in South London starts supplying audio cables to local wholesalers



'79
Launch of BT1 Tilt & Swivel Speaker Mount



'81
Registration of Supreme Audio Solutions



MPB AUDIO LTD

At the age of 18, in 1966, my father drove from his native Lancashire to London in an Isetta bubble car. He found a home in Thornton Heath near Croydon in the south of the capital and had several jobs before joining Radio Spares (RS Components) as an area sales manager. Soon after, he decided that instead of selling another company's products, going solo as his own boss would be a much more fruitful way to make a living. It was from this epiphany that...

On 31st May 1972, MPB Audio Services Ltd was founded and this was the genesis of the company that would become the B-Tech International Group.

Using his £500 savings, Martin tilted a small unit and bought a van. He visited electrical component retailers around South London, reselling audio leads and connectors that he purchased from wholesalers. Over time, his reputation and business volume grew, and the wholesalers started approaching him to be supplied themselves. This was the first step up the AV food chain and the second step quickly followed. Thanks to the large Philips factory in Croydon, there was a plentiful supply of homeworkers who were experienced in soldering. So rather than just reselling cables, he hired a local workforce to assemble the cables and plugs, with a particular focus on the 5 pin DIN plug and cable, which were then packaged and sold. My mother, grandparents, and I would spend our weekends with our own mini-assembly line as and when needed!

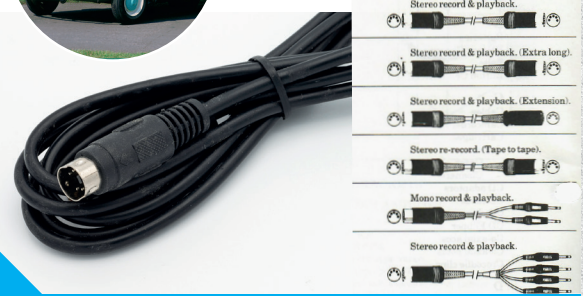
By the late 1970s, Martin had taken the next big step in the Company's evolution and started importing cables and plugs directly from Taiwan. It was from this point that key relationships with partners in Taiwan began; relationships that would later play a big role in B-Tech's development. The improved pricing gained from buying in bulk from the Far East allowed Supreme Audio Services to expand the range and supply wholesalers.

DESIGN ENGINEERING

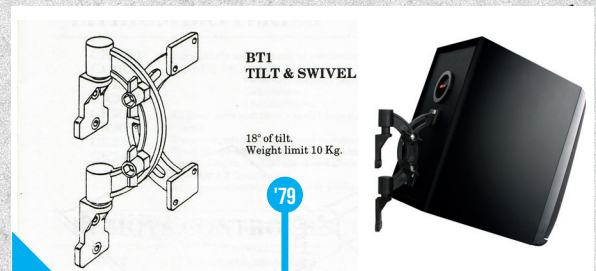
What comes next could be considered one of the most pivotal moves in B-Tech's history. In the 1970s, the AV market was developing quickly. On the audio side, there was a growing market for home hi-fi systems with the emergence of component stereo systems. Prior to this, all-in-one set-ups were the norm, and only real audiophiles had separate components to get high-end performance. However, the 1970s saw this become more mass-market as people put together systems that included amplifiers, turntables, radios, cassette players (CDs came a bit later!) and speakers. To cater for the growing demand for optimised loudspeaker acoustics, the revolutionary **BT1 'Tilt & Swivel' Speaker Mount** was launched in 1979. Designed by Tom Tucker, this was manufactured in the UK, with the original metal design later being changed to glass-reinforced nylon. The success of this speaker mount led to my father designing additional speaker mounts and then floor stands.



The Isetta Bubble that got B-Tech on the road!



The 5 pin DIN Plug and Cable was one of the first products sold & distributed by Martin Bennett's new company



BT1 was the first mount developed for B-Tech, in 1979; the tilt & swivel feature on a speaker mount was the first of its kind and was still selling over 40 years later



'81
Supreme Audio Services was the second company name before changing to B-Tech in 1985
B-Tech's office in the mid-80s, located at Maple Terrace in Penge, London

B-Tech acquires Bib

2000s

B-Tech expands into the professional install market with modular pole systems for large CRT mounts

B-Tech opens office in Hong Kong for direct FOB shipments

B-Tech starts to distribute Flat Screen Mounts

UK office relocates from Croydon to Daventry, Northants

Launch of System 2 component range

Opening of 1st European office in Belgium

Launch of Ventry consumer range

B-Tech ownership changes hands with an MBO

2010s

B-Tech open offices in China & Vietnam

First Pop-Out Videowall Mount launched

More global offices open in Spain, Germany & UAE

Launch of System X component range

B-Tech opens new B-Tech office in USA

B-Tech wins AV Manufacturer of the Year award

B-Tech acquires Mode-AL

dvLED solutions begin development

2022





'82
Launch of first video control switch BT21 Scart Control



'85
Starts participating at the Olympia Live shows in London, increasing consumer exposure



'89
SAS becomes B-Tech Limited



'89
The BT26 Phono Pre-Amp sales increase in Europe



'89
New offices & warehouse opens in New Addington

At around the same time, visual devices such as camcorders and video players, were entering the market. Televisions typically only had one auxiliary input which created an inconvenience when users wanted to use more than one device with their TV. My father's solution was to design a switchbox that connected the multiple auxiliary inputs to the television, this would save the hassle of repeatedly plugging and unplugging pieces of equipment, by allowing the input to be changed with the flick of a switch. It also minimised potential damage to the plugs.

With a hunger to develop additional original products, Martin visited Taiwan for the first time in 1981 to meet his supply partners. During this visit, he designed and developed the **BT21 Scart Switchbox**. This was quickly followed by further Scart controls such as the **BT22**, and then RCA/Cinch controls for non-Scart TVs. Switches and input controls for loudspeakers were also developed, including the **BT12 Two-Way Speaker Control**, and the **BT13** for four speakers. These products would go on to become the 'industry standard' with many replicas being made and sold widely. The brand name given to the products he had designed was abbreviated from Bennett Technologies and became the first application of the name used in our brand today... **B-Tech**.

As the Company moved through the 1980s it continued to expand. A key development was the acquisition of **Lennard Developments** in 1985. Lennard Developments was a specialist audio accessories distributor, based in Enfield, Middlesex. This acquisition allowed Martin to expand the number of products, which included a comprehensive range of record styli, cartridges, turntable belts and attachments. Among them was the *Bib* range of hi-fi accessories, including video headcleaner cassettes and the industry famous 'Groov-Kleen' record cleaner. Unbeknownst at the time, *Bib* would later feature heavily in the B-Tech story.

B-TECH LIMITED

Whilst expanding the Company operations, Martin continued his passion for designing products. After the success of the speaker brackets, he decided to venture into designing mounts for televisions, and developed the company's first wall mount for old-style 16" CRT TVs (**BT16**). It was the era when households began owning a second television for use in a different room, such as the bedroom or kitchen. With limited space or shelving, the option of mounting a television on a specialist wall mount out of the way gained appeal. This development, which was quickly followed by mounts for 18", 21" and for what was then very big, 25" televisions, would prove to be a fundamental step in the history of B-Tech. From being a generic audio-visual accessories distributor, B-Tech now also had a portfolio of original designed products, for a range of different equipment. To reflect the increased market awareness of the B-Tech brand, it was decided to change the Company name.

In 1989 MPB Audio Ltd (trading as *Supreme Audio Services*) became **B-Tech Limited**.

The growing market presence created interest from established, big-name brands, who wanted to take B-Tech products on an *Original Equipment Manufacturer* (OEM) private label basis. Aside from licensing some of the audio video controls to be sold in this way to companies such as *Hama* and *Bandridge*, B-Tech also reached agreements with several speaker brands to supply them on an OEM basis, including *Tannoy*, *Panasonic* and *Target Hi-Fi*. The collaboration with *Target Hi-Fi* in the 1980s led to our first foray into the North American market, with the BT1 being rebranded under the *Target* name and distributed by *May Audio*.

B-Tech continued to explore any opportunities for market expansion no matter where in the world they came. Our first partner was *Derek Flett*, of *Sherlane Agencies* in Ireland, and it was not long before partners were added from Germany and Norway. In Germany's case, it was a family hi-fi accessory business run by *Thomas Barz* and his father *Gunther Barz*, called *Barz Electronic Berlin* (*BEB*). *BEB* had a comprehensive range of hi-fi accessories, especially for vinyl, and *Thomas* had been interested in B-Tech's latest design - the **BT26 Phono Pre-Amp**.



Finding ways to relax at the weekend
Martin stock car racing in his B-Tech sponsored Ford Escort

LENNARD DEVELOPMENTS LTD.

Supreme Audio Service acquired Lennard Developments Ltd.,
Expanding the company customer base



'85
Stylus Identification Catalogue and Cartridge Selection from the Acknowledged Experts...

1985 saw Record Styli & Cartridges added to the B-Tech / SAS Range



'86
BT16 was B-Tech's first TV mount designed for use with 16" CRT Televisions. Later a range of 'Viewlogic' mounts was introduced to cater for larger TVs



MPB Audio (Supreme Audio Services) changes name to B-Tech Limited

THE ORIGINAL B-TECH LOGO!





'94
The award winning BT77 Side-Clamping Speaker Mounts starts getting more recognition



'95
By 1995 B-Tech had a full range of TV mounts



'97
Continual growth meant relocating to larger facilities in New Addington



'98
International exhibition debuts



'99
Bib Hi-Fi Accessories Ltd. Acquired

In the years to come, over 100,000 units of the **BT26** were to be sold by the Barz family. At a similar time, we received interest from Norway, but in this case it originated from our speaker mounts. The company was *Interconnect* and was operated by *Ole Apold* and *Halfdan Klingenberg*. *Interconnect* was the Norwegian distributor for *Target Hi-Fi*. Having noted that B-Tech was the designer and manufacturer of the *Target* speaker mount, *Interconnect* asked if it could handle distribution of the B-Tech range in Norway. Some 30 years later, it gives me great pride to be able to say that we are still working with *Derek Flett*, *Thomas Barz* and his family and with *Halfdan Klingenberg* under his new company, *Solvo-Tech* following the retirement of *Ole Apold*.



Matt Bennett with B-Tech's 1st international distributors *Derek Flett* from *Sherlane Agencies* & *Halfdan Klingenberg* from *Interconnect*, being presented with the inaugural, one time only 'Bracket of the Year' Award

B-TECH INTERNATIONAL LTD

Although my father had taken part in the *Harrogate Hi-Fi Show* in the UK throughout the 70s and 80s (where he had met *Derek Flett*), in the following years B-Tech took part in an increasing number of international trade shows including *CES* in the US, *IFA* in Berlin, the *International Hardware Show* in Cologne and the *Live* shows at Olympia, London. This international presence combined with the growing demand for B-Tech products, allowed new distribution partners to be picked up in Portugal, Denmark and Italy, to add to those already found in Ireland, Norway and Germany.

In 1996, the Company name was updated to reflect our greater global reach and we became B-Tech International Ltd.

During the late 90s, through fate more than intention, I joined B-Tech in what was intended to be a temporary position whilst I tried to find corporate work in London. I had aspirations to work at an accountancy or law firm but in the meantime, my father offered warehouse work to me, selling the idea that it would come with the added bonus of improving my fitness for rugby! B-Tech was now located in New Addington, on the outskirts of Croydon, and this work gave me the basic income that I needed to rent a flat in Croydon and search for work in the city. At the beginning of 1998 I started work, picking and packing shipments and unloading containers. After six months of searching for another job without progress, I discussed with my father what options might be available to me. We agreed that I would extend my time with B-Tech and expand my skill set (to make me more employable elsewhere) by spending time in each department. Although I spent the majority of my time in the warehouse, my father had me trained in the accounts, sales administration and product development side of the business whilst *Terry Rickards* and *Tom Tucker* taught me about selling.

I dived straight into the deep end on the sales front and it would ultimately lead me to where I am today. After exhibiting at the *Hardware Show* in Cologne, we had secured a new distribution partner in Poland.

In November 1998, they requested a meeting with B-Tech at their headquarters in Warsaw. Unfortunately, no one at B-Tech could attend, so I grabbed the opportunity and volunteered myself to go.

I had always enjoyed travelling and going on adventures, so I felt this would be the perfect chance to combine work with my own personal passions.

Before I knew it, I had arrived and was whisked from the airport by an off-the-meter taxi to a remote, snow-covered industrial area next to an ageing power station, armed only with a suitcase full of bracket samples. To say that trip was an eye-opener is an understatement in so many ways. Certainly it was a success, leading to many years of cooperation, but more importantly, it had opened my mind to what sort of career I could shape for myself at B-Tech.



Design Engineering : A combination of the latest technology with design expertise, using top quality materials to produce a first class product.



Design Engineering : A combination of the latest technology with design expertise using top quality materials to produce a first class product.

Throughout the '90s, B-Tech's product range vastly expanded with new products such as AV Controls, Speaker Brackets and TV Mounts

In agreement with the rest of the Company, I started developing the international side of the business. With the initial focus on Europe, I set-up distribution agreements in many more countries including Greece, Spain, Sweden and France as well as developing existing relationships. All of this allowed me to gain more experience and knowledge of these countries and their cultures.

Whilst our business was growing across Europe, in the UK another key development in B-Tech's history took place, involving the previously mentioned, well known British company called **Bib Hi-Fi Accessories**. Formed in 1964 and awarded the Queen's Enterprise Certificate for Export in 1976, *Bib* was recognised globally for designing and developing an innovative range of audio video accessories such as VHS headcleaner cassettes, tape-splicing kits and their "Groov-Kleen" record cleaner. When an opportunity to acquire *Bib* arose at the end of 1999, my father quickly reached an agreement with the owner *Brian Arbib* and a deal was sealed with a handshake.

So as of December 1999, Bib became part of B-Tech International Ltd.

John Embley, who had worked for *Bib* for over 25 years, would later join B-Tech and play a key role in our development over the 15 years that followed.

The *Bib* range of products complemented that of B-Tech's, covering everything an audiophile could want in record care and maintenance. An additional advantage was that it opened the existing *Bib* network of customers and distributors to B-Tech's range of mounts and controls. Aside from UK retailers such as *WHSmith* and *Woolworths*, *Bib* also had a number of key international partners. The most pivotal of these was *Rocelco Inc*, a family company run by *Norman Yeager* and his son *Jack Yeager* from Toronto, Canada. The developing relationship with *Rocelco* proved to be pivotal in B-Tech's next leap forward.

Rocelco had similar traits to that of B-Tech, not least that we were both family-owned and run. Involved in the hi-fi industry since the early 1960s, *Rocelco* was very much an anglophile company, representing a number of British brands in North America and in particular loudspeaker designer *Celestion*. *Rocelco* recognised the potential that B-Tech mounts could have in the Canadian retail market, and it was agreed that it would become B-Tech's distributor for Canada. Working closely with *Jack Yeager*, we were able to meet many of the demands that the Canadian AV market had. This included producing bilingual packaging for our products which allowed them to be sold throughout Canada, including in the French-speaking Quebec area. This focus on service helped *Rocelco* get B-Tech products their first big break into mass retail, with multiple product lines – or SKUs - being listed by retailers such as *Future Shop* (later bought by *Best Buy*) and *Leon's Furniture*. It was always a pleasure to visit the *Yeagers* in Canada, I always enjoyed the company of *Norman* and the stories that he told, and I learned so much going to visit customers with *Jack*.

B-TECH PROFESSIONAL

Despite our growing success in mass market retail products, my father was keen to diversify our product range and target markets. He did not want B-Tech to be over-reliant on the merciless retail industry. Although retail offered some great volume opportunities, the low margins that result from the 'race to the bottom' on pricing meant that it came with significant risk. As my father was always saying: "Volume is vanity, profit is sanity". With this in mind, he began designing a number of mounting solutions aimed at the professional AV install market. An expansion of our television bracket range included mounts for larger TVs that would typically be used in public areas (**BT710/BT711**, **BT760/BT761** and **BT790/BT791**), trolleys and stands which were ideal for the education market (**BT805** and **BT865**) and the beginning of our modular range of extension poles, ceiling brackets and accessories. The range was expanded to include mounts for projectors, large and small. The timing was good as the AV industry was introducing flat panel displays, particularly plasma screens, to the market.



B-Tech exhibiting in the '90s
A rare photo of Martin Bennett and Tom Tucker not wearing sandals

Bib Accessories, founded in 1964, was the industry standard for AV accessories, B-Tech acquired the brand in late 1999

Bib was awarded The Queen's Award for Export Achievement in 1976

John Embley joined B-Tech in 2000 after working for Bib and will be greatly missed

Martin & Matt Bennett welcome Jack & Norman Yeager from Rocelco to the UK showroom

Stealth
Supports à Plancher pour Haut-Parleurs Ambiants

Rocelco promoting B-Tech at CES, Las Vegas

In order to fulfil Rocelco's requirements, direct shipments from China and products in dual language packaging had to be organised

Caractéristique:
 • Convenable pour la majorité de haut-parleurs ambiants
 • Fourni avec toutes les fixations nécessaires
 • Hauteur Ajustable
 • Min. 885mm / 2'7"
 • Max. 1000mm / 4'3.1"
 • Poids légers, facile à installer
 • 20 pour câbles de haut-parleur dans la colonne centrale



'01
The first B-Tech website launches at www.b-tech-int.com



'02
Opening of the first B-Tech international office in Hong Kong



'03
Explosion of Consumer Flat Screen Mount sales



'03
UK HQ relocates to Daventry, Northamptonshire



'06
Opening of B-Tech offices in Belgium & Singapore

B-Tech became one of the first companies in the UK to offer mounting solutions for plasma screens (which in those days weighed the proverbial ton and needed somewhat industrial mounting solutions to hold them). I remember the fear in the AV mounting world as the industry voices predicted that there would be no need for mounts anymore – televisions were becoming so thin they could just be stuck on the wall and wouldn't need specialised mounting solutions! We didn't know it then, but these fears were unfounded.

The transformation from CRT to flat panel televisions led to our biggest growth spurt to date and one of the most pivotal moments in our history.

As we entered the new millennium, B-Tech continued to grow on multiple fronts. We had a greater focus on our own range of products (including *Bib*) but with a split between the retail and the Pro-AV ranges. At the same time, we had been busy developing our international distribution, albeit principally for the retail sector. As with the revolution of flat screens entering the market, there was also a boom for home cinema speaker packages. Again B-Tech was able to design, manufacture and bring to market solutions, including our patented **BT33/BT332 Home Cinema Speaker Wall Mounts** and **BT10** and **BT11 Home Cinema Speaker Floor Stands**. These were selected by *Future Shop* in Canada to lead their Boxing Week promotions. However, the volumes they wanted were far beyond anything we had produced before. We were hamstrung by the limits on space and the costs of handling it all in the UK, so we had to look at alternative options. The only way that we could meet this demand - and for the required price, was by producing the product entirely in Asia and shipping it directly to Vancouver in Canada.

As with any challenge, opportunities are created. Having been successful in supplying *Future Shop* in Canada with a limited number of products direct from China, I could see the direction that the Company had to move in. I felt the best way we could compete, in both price and volume, would be to set-up production and assemblage entirely in Asia. This would allow B-Tech to ship directly to the headquarters in the UK and allow the UK operation to focus more on distribution rather than assembly, as well as sales and marketing. The biggest question was how we could do this, and who would oversee it. Aside from what it could do for the business, I was intrigued and excited about the personal development that could be had from such an experience, so I decided to volunteer myself for the task to see if I could make my idea work.

SAFE • SOLID • SECURE

It was agreed that we would transfer production to our Taiwanese partner, with manufacturing taking place in Dongguan, China. By June 2002, with a loan of \$50,000, I had moved to Hong Kong and set up a new office to manage this process. When I left, I didn't know whether I would be there for six days, six weeks, six months or longer, but it was a gamble I wanted to take. Once there, I quickly knew I was there to stay, and it gave me great satisfaction to pay back the loan within six months.

The decision to transfer production would turn out to be another key moment because it led to B-Tech being truly international, way beyond the UK and Europe.

Although my focus had been on overseeing the transfer of production and the manufacturing side of the business from the UK to China, I also looked to create further opportunities. Despite living in Hong Kong, I continued to manage the export side of the UK business. Before long, we were supplying customers direct from Hong Kong by the container load.



The Professional AV market required a different approach to the consumer section, including a new modular system for integrators



The rise in popularity for LCD & Plasma screens required developing a new range of mounting solutions, while a boom in Home Cinema set-ups allowed B-Tech to expand its range of Speaker Mounts.
(Right) The BT33 Speaker Mount, one of B-Tech's first patented designs

TURN SILVER INTO GOLD WITH B-TECH

Silver is today's hot colour for audio/video components, and B-Tech is without peer for a wider range of Silver television mounts, speaker mounts and speaker stands. And only B-Tech offers you all these great features:

- Proven built "Shed Engineering" in the UK with over 20 years' experience and continuous improvement, for unbeatable functionality, flexibility, and ease of use.
- Superior strength, style and reliability - all supports tested to double rated weight capacity and feature a generous supply of technical specifications.
- Select finishes and models also available in Black, meet competitive pricing and highest margins in the business.

By solving your customers' installation and placement problems, B-Tech sets you with better and more profitable sales opportunities, and some real money. Plus our packaging packages offer a premium presentation package, get the attention of impulse buyers with minimal sales effort. With complete customer education and the inclusion of B-Tech audio/video supports, controls, cables, adapters and maintenance products to stock, we don't just look a good thing, we deliver the goods.

So don't delay - call for a quote and pricing and let B-Tech start turning silver into gold today!

ROCELCO INC. B-Tech
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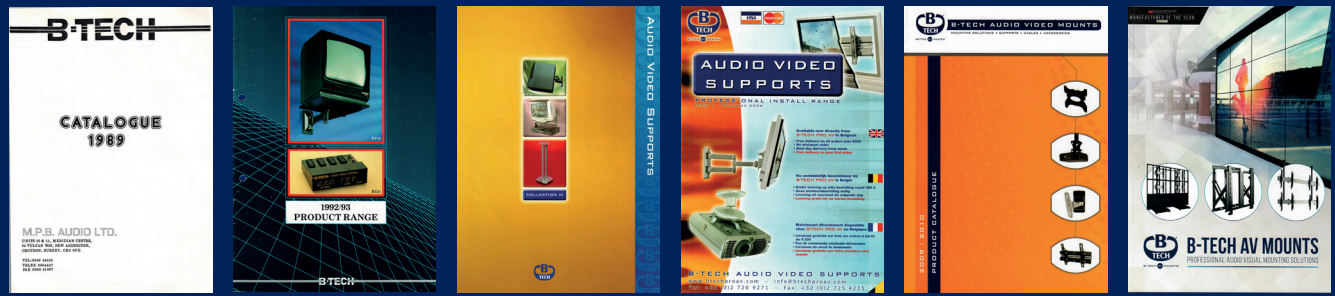
B-Tech products start being widely promoted in Canada with new distributors Rocelco Inc.



'02
Matt Bennett sets up the first overseas office (B-Tech International (Hong Kong) Ltd.) located on Hong Kong Island to manage FOB shipments from China



Changing faces of the B-Tech catalogue from 1989 - 2018



In addition, to generate further interest we participated in the *Hong Kong Electronics Fair* each October and April. From this we secured a number of OEM agreements for brands such as *JVC, Conrad, Skymaster, G&BL, Masterplug* and *Ellies*, as well as large retail chains such as *Argos, Darty* and *Comet*. To aid in this side of the business, my brother *Thomas Bennett*, who had joined the Company in the UK to produce the product artwork, moved to Hong Kong and helped me develop the branding and packaging for our OEM customers.

Back in the UK, following the transfer of production and assembly to China, the business model was evolving. It was important that B-Tech had enough space to take in prepacked products in volume. With costs so high in London and the South-East of the UK, it was not viable to stay in the area. We looked further afield and found a suitable warehouse in Daventry, Northamptonshire, in the centre of the UK and within easy access to the M1, M6 and M40 motorways. In the summer of 2003, Daventry became our new UK distribution centre.

Throughout the rest of the noughties, B-Tech expanded its teams in both the UK and Hong Kong to support the growth of the business. Martin, still running the UK side of the business, kept his 'design hat' on, coming up with more and more products to cater for the increasing demand, particularly for flat screen TVs. He established a team of product designers in the UK that could turn his concepts and drawings into professional CAD models which were sent to myself and the Hong Kong team for production. It was around this time that *Gary Purton*, now our Director of Product Management, joined B-Tech on a work-placement year as part of his degree. Another notable recruit was *Paul Haggarty*, who joined the UK team and soon took over responsibility for the UK export business from myself. Later on he was also responsible for our expansion into the Iberian peninsula. *Simon Pilcher* also joined, initially in a marketing role, but later became our General Manager in the UK.

The success of our approach in the UK, where we were seeing considerable year-on-year growth, led to us contemplating whether this could be replicated elsewhere.

In 2006 several new B-Tech companies were formed around the world. My father opened *B-Tech Pro-AV bvba* in Belgium, to serve the Benelux market. Similarly, I did the same with *B-Tech AV Mounts Pte Ltd* in Singapore and launched B-Tech in the USA.

A FAMILY BUSINESS

In 2007 my father decided that it was time for him to take a step back from the business and announced that he would like to find a buyer for B-Tech. A nagging feeling lingered within me as I felt that my time wasn't done and I wanted to explore how far I could take the Company, operating it as a single united B-Tech. I took the decision to give it a go and was able to get a multi-million pound finance package together.

In April 2008, I completed the management buy-out (MBO) of the parts of the business owned by my father; B-Tech International in the UK and B-Tech Pro-AV in Belgium, and joined them with the businesses in the Far East that I had set up. Now I could start putting together my plans for B-Tech International...

Upon completing the MBO, I moved back to the UK from Asia so I could focus on the UK operation. I decided to close the New Addington operation to consolidate everything into Daventry. All of the key staff were happy to relocate, so after 35 years operating out of Croydon/South London, collectively we were firmly committed to the Midlands.



'05

B-Tech Hong Kong staff exhibiting at the Hong Kong Electronic Fair
Opening new markets for B-Tech in Australia, New Zealand & South Africa



'03

In 2003 it became necessary to seek larger facilities outside of Croydon and due to continual growth, in 2008 B-Tech UK fully relocated its HQ to Daventry, Northamptonshire



'08

A family business, handing over the reins.
Matt and Martin Bennett complete the management buyout of B-Tech



BT16



BT711



BT7515



BT8310



BT9340

The next couple of years were extremely challenging due to the *Global Financial Crisis* (GFC) that hit the world shortly after I had bought B-Tech. All of a sudden, like many other businesses around the world, our focus narrowed to keeping the company afloat. The bank that had generously agreed the loans to finance the MBO turned the tables and called them in, putting B-Tech and myself into an extremely difficult situation. Although B-Tech was profitable, it suffered under the burden of the loan debt. Though the banks felt a public backlash for creating the GFC, they did not hide the fact that their priority was recuperating as much as they could, regardless of the impact on the businesses or anyone involved with them. These were dark days and many an afternoon was spent waiting in anticipation of administrators coming in to close us down. However, we kept them at bay and after considerable endeavour to keep the company afloat a deal was reached. By 2014 B-Tech could start again, this time debt free and not beholden to the banks.

B-TECH AUDIO VIDEO MOUNTS ETHOS

After these lengthy distractions, for the first time in nearly four years I was able to concentrate on the business and where I wanted to take it.

One of the most important attributes of B-Tech - its essence - is that of service. I believe you should treat your customers with respect, honesty and expediency - just how you would want to be treated yourself.

Unlike the retail side of the business where customers only needed to stock a limited range of products, the Pro-AV side consisted of hundreds of SKUs, both full kits and components. Finding distribution partners with enough space and financial capability to commit to stocking the range, as well as the dedicated team to manage it, was not an easy task to say the least. Buoyed by the experiences of our operations in Belgium and Singapore, I decided that when circumstances were right, B-Tech would set up its own company in countries where we intended to do business. Effectively becoming the distributor and offering the levels of service that I deemed correct.

One of the key conditions I set myself, particularly after my experiences with 'the bank', was that each of these sister companies had to be self-financed by B-Tech. It was always a risk setting up in a new country despite our best due diligence and I had to ensure that B-Tech, as a wider group, would not be put at risk itself from any venture. As always, success breeds success, and the more successful B-Tech was in each operation, the more revenue was created that could be invested into other global operations.

This strategy was also core to my desire to spread the risk in terms of revenue. I did not want B-Tech to just rely on one country. There would simply be too much exposure. The wider B-Tech could reach globally, the more I could spread the risk and reduce the impact of any local or regional economic downturns, or the slowdown of development in local AV industries.

To complement our operation in Belgium, I wanted to develop our Pro-AV business in Germany and in 2010 we set up operations in Berlin, forming **B-Tech Deutschland GmbH** with *Thomas Barz* and later on his son *Christopher Barz*.

Two years later, with the experience in Spain of our Export Manager *Paul Haggarty*, we took the opportunity to set up our own operation and **B-Tech International (Iberia) SL** was formed. Paul grew the Iberian business rapidly with an excellent team that included *Andreu Aguilar* and *Montse Baena*, both of whom had been part of our previous distributor's team. Spain, together with Belgium, which was prospering under the guidance of *Steven Verdood*, gave us three locations in continental Europe.

AVnews profile

Martin Bennett B-Tech International



Q. What was the critical obstacle that led to your current success?
A. I started the business in 1997 and I was involved in the AV industry for 20 years. I was a small business owner and I was a small business owner. I was a small business owner. I was a small business owner.

Q. What was the biggest risk that you took in developing the company?
A. The biggest risk was probably dropping a whole host of small accounts. I had to make a decision to focus on a few key accounts and to drop the rest. I had to make a decision to focus on a few key accounts and to drop the rest.

Q. What are the most important factors in your success?
A. I think the most important factors in my success are my relationships with my customers and my suppliers. I have a strong network of people who I can rely on for advice and support. I have a strong network of people who I can rely on for advice and support.

Q. What are your plans for the future?
A. I plan to continue to grow the business and to expand into new markets. I plan to continue to grow the business and to expand into new markets.

Respected throughout the industry, Martin Bennett was always happy to share his expertise



UK staff photo from B-Tech's 35th Anniversary celebrations in 2007. Including Gary Purton, Mark Walker, Paul Haggarty, Nikki Batchelor & Tom Bennett all still with B-Tech 15 years later!



Matt Bennett with Thomas Barz discussing the formation of B-Tech Deutschland GmbH

Thomas, Steven and Andreu strategising the way forward for B-Tech



'08

Matt takes control of B-Tech through a management buyout



Opening of B-Tech Germany



'12

Opening of B-Tech Iberia



'12

Launch of our first Pop-out Videowall Mount

'13



Opening of B-Tech China

'14



Opening of B-Tech Vietnam



Opening of B-Tech MEA

It was important to me that these weren't seen as German or Spanish satellite offices of B-Tech in the UK, but that we actually had German and Spanish companies that happened to be part of B-Tech.

This meant that we could employ local people, use local services and hopefully play a small role in boosting the local economy.

BETTER BY DESIGN

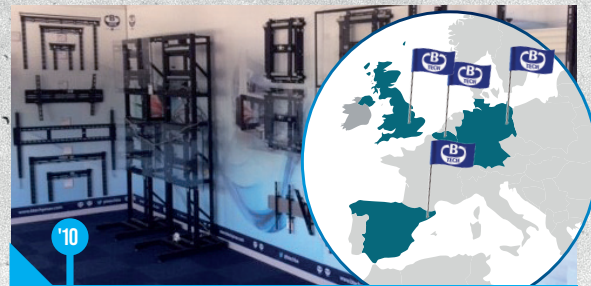
Although we were gaining market penetration with our pro-AV products worldwide, the traditional retail market had not been forgotten. We decided to design and launch a new range of entry level wall mounts specifically for the retail market. This became known as the 'Ventry Range' (play on Value Entry Range). In the UK, one of our key distributors at that time, *Lawton Trade Supplies*, had been appointed as our exclusive UK distributor for Ventry, but with the retail market still suffering from the GFC, the typical distribution model was being eroded as everybody looked to cut costs. Using the same thought process that I had used on the Pro-AV side of the business, I felt that B-Tech should go direct to market. An opportunity arose and B-Tech acted quickly to acquire Lawton, including its OEM brands such as *Listen*. We hired Lawton's best and most experienced salesman, *Mirek Matwiejczyk*, who had been selling B-Tech products for longer than he wanted to remember, and went direct to the retail market. An added aspect of the deal was the inclusion of the *Diamond Stylus Company (DSC)*. This brought B-Tech full circle as we already had a dedicated customer base for styli going back to the *Lennard Developments* days, as well as *Bib*. We now had the full offering from *DSC* to complement our own products, and a combined customer base far greater than we'd ever had before.

On the manufacturing front, although the move to China had been a success, costs were increasing in the region, presenting us with some challenges. We therefore decided to transfer manufacturing from the Dongguan region to the Ningbo area. To manage this operation efficiently, we set up an additional B-Tech company in Ningbo, *Ningbo B-Tech International Trading Co., Ltd.* This was managed by *Mark Almond*, who had joined us in Hong Kong five years earlier, and soon after we had a good team based in Ningbo. This included *Jenny Li*, who, having proven her astuteness, initiative, and good business sense, is still with B-Tech and is now our Director of Operations for APAC, based out of our Ningbo office.

We continued to explore opportunities to gain a competitive advantage and additional manufacturing bases were sought. It was decided that Vietnam would be our next destination and after significant time researching opportunities there, in 2015 B-Tech set up an operation in Hanoi, Vietnam – *B-Tech International Vina Co., Ltd.* To reflect what I considered to be a very important aspect of our Company - that we design and manufacture our own products - our operation in Hong Kong became *B-Tech International Design and Manufacturing Ltd.* This part of the business now manages and oversees the manufacturing and supply chain for B-Tech, including our operations in China and Vietnam, and coordinates with our UK, European and North American operations.

I was also keen for B-Tech to gain a greater presence in the Middle East and SAARC region. In 2014 B-Tech entered into an agreement to form *B Tech Audio Visual Accessories Trading LLC*, based in Dubai, UAE. The demand for our new videowall mounting solutions was incredible and had justified setting up a dedicated local operation.

Jon Alway, who had joined B-Tech in the UK to aid our export expansion, took the helm for our MEA adventure and it was not long before B-Tech products were being specified into all kinds of projects around the Middle East and India.



'10

By 2010, B-Tech had 4 European offices with warehouses and showrooms facilities in addition to the two offices located in Asia

Ventry
Flat Screen
Wall Mounts

Putting you in the picture with the Ventry range of flat screen wall mounts from B-Tech

Quick and Simple Installation

FLAT SCREEN WALL MOUNT
with Double Arm

The Ventry Range was launched to supply Flat Screen and Speaker Mounts to cover the Consumer market

LAWTON
TRADING IN TECHNOLOGY

DIAMOND SYLLUS

Established AV companies Lawton Trade Supplies & Diamond Stylus Company acquired by B-Tech in 2011



'13

B-Tech opens offices in Ningbo, China, and later Hanoi, Vietnam to oversee productions, QC & operations in the APAC region

B-TECH AV MOUNTS
بي تيك لتجارة الأجهزة السمعية والمرئية ش.ذ.م.م

PROFESSIONAL AUDIO VISUAL MOUNTING SOLUTIONS

Exhibiting at InfoComm MEA. Expanding B-Tech's presence in the Middle East

'14



Back on the product development front, we saw another seismic shift in the industry beginning to take place, with the emergence of digital signage. This meant increasing demand for specialist mounting solutions for videowalls and large screens, and B-Tech was in a prime position to take advantage.

Sensing an opportunity to change the way the market thinks about mounting AV equipment, *Mark Walker*, who had joined B-Tech in 2007, came up with a revolutionary mounting system based on extruded aluminium - **System X**. This is essentially a component-based range from which infinite solutions can be created. Additionally, he designed and developed an industry first configuration tool that automatically selects the required components. B-Tech had already made significant ground in the digital signage market with the introduction of the **BT8310 Push-In Push-Out Videowall Mount** a few years earlier, but System X gave us an innovative new way of serving the market and provided a huge amount of flexibility to integrators. In 2016 this innovation was recognised when System X was awarded a commendation at the prestigious *AV Awards* in London.

For the Pro-AV market, the predominant show is *ISE* in Europe. Aside from the first show in Geneva, B-Tech has been ever-present in Amsterdam (as well as the one-off in Brussels) and is signed up for exhibiting in *ISE's* new home of Barcelona. In North America, our first *InfoComm* was in Atlanta 2004 followed by ones in Las Vegas, Orlando, and Anaheim. We have also participated at the *CEDIA Show* in Denver and the *Digital Signage Show* in Las Vegas, as well as international *InfoComm* shows in Dubai, Singapore, Johannesburg, Moscow, Bangkok, Mumbai, Japan and Korea.

B-TECH AV MOUNTS

Having a good local service and a good product range doesn't go far if people aren't aware of what you offer. Our brand awareness varies from market to market with some naturally being stronger than others. Each international market is different. I realised that with the expansion of the product range over the previous 40 years, B-Tech was offering quite a convoluted mix. Although we had the mainstay of B-Tech-branded products, we also had the *Bib* range, *Listen* from *Lawton*, *Styli* from *Diamond Stylus Company* and so on. This meant that we were selling everything from expensive professional television mounts to hamburger-themed CD wallets; from Scart cables to MiniBox cases, and styli to television furniture. Given the nature of some of the markets that these products were being sold into, the opportunity to make any sensible margin was diminishing quickly. Too many products were essentially copied by numerous factories in China driving down the cost.

Taking these factors into consideration, I decided that the Company needed focus, both in our product range and branding, so that it was clear what we did and what we specialise in. We had a multitude of names including **B-Tech International Ltd** in the UK, **B-Tech Pro-AV** in Belgium and **B-Tech Deutschland** in Germany. Aside from the word 'B-Tech', there was little consistency in what we represented. Over the next few years, we were able to refine our available ranges to products that were exclusively designed and developed by ourselves and available under the B-Tech brand. Taking the *Ronseal* approach, I felt that we should keep it simple and have the brand stating clearly what we do - **B-Tech AV Mounts**.

In 2009 *Nick Spencer* joined B-Tech and brought his creative genius with him whilst embracing the ideas and philosophies that I wanted B-Tech to demonstrate; what we stood for as a company. B-Tech's branding was revolutionised, from our packaging and catalogues to our website, booth design at tradeshows and promotional material. We support each of our international operations with local marketing and branding support, as well as tailored programmes with our distribution partners. We have multilingual marketing support which helps to reinforce our 'local service on a global scale' philosophy.

The triumvirate of *Nick Spencer* (Director of Marketing and Communications), *Mark Walker* (who is now our Director of Operations in the UK) and *Gary Purton* (who, as Director of Product Management, was responsible for bringing quality products to the table) meant that B-Tech could design, produce, distribute and market professional mounting solutions to the world.



MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR

By reinforcing who we were, what we did and how we liked to do business, it allowed B-Tech to give me the most unexpected night of my life in September 2017 at the AV Awards. It had only been in the past couple of years that we had been attending this annual event so just to be sitting there as a nominee for *Manufacturer of the Year* was incredible. We had been nominated alongside such industry behemoths as *Samsung, NEC, Panasonic, Sharp* and *Crestron*. This was more than enough for me – never in a million years had I expected B-Tech to be mentioned in the same sentence as these companies.

As the final accolade of the evening, B-Tech AV Mounts was announced as the winner of the coveted Manufacturer of the Year award.

It took a moment for the announcement to sink in, before remembering that I was expected to be on stage to accept the award. Not being one for the limelight, I did not relish the idea of this one bit and remain grateful to my colleagues who were eager to join me on stage to receive this prestigious trophy. B-Tech's achievements are a team effort and not about individuals, so it allowed everyone to enjoy the extremely surreal moment! That award and the general good feeling we received from within the industry in the aftermath was incredible. B-Tech, the company that began as a small family business from Croydon, had beaten industry titans to become the first mount company, and first British company ever, to win this award after more than 25 years. Knowing the result was decided by a panel of judges, rather than a public vote and therefore defaulting to the company with the largest customer base, made this an especially proud moment.

Receiving such an accolade meant that our profile would be greatly enhanced, leading to higher expectations of our brand. We knew that we would have to raise our standards to an even higher level. This was a challenge that I was up for and believed that B-Tech could embrace. We had to push ourselves further than ever before if we were to live up to what the Manufacturer of the Year represented.

WORLDWIDE GROWTH

After sacrificing our US business following the GFC in 2008, I was determined to have another attempt at entering the lucrative North American market. Following our AV Awards win and good growth in all other territories, our global presence had never been stronger and so I felt that it was the perfect time for B-Tech to return. So, in 2017 **B-Tech AV Mounts LLC** was set-up, and we once again had a presence in the States. We had gained a number of international projects and servicing these justified the need to have our own operation there. At the same time, we recommenced exhibiting at the *InfoComm* shows to relaunch our brand in the US and it is fair to say that the approach has been fruitful. Since then we have expanded our operations further, with the opening of a new office in Brea, California, with an experienced senior sales management team, a nationwide network of manufacturers' reps, national distributors for the USA, Canada and Mexico and most recently, a design and engineering team to cater specifically for the North American market.

During the following year an opportunity arose to acquire renowned British Designer and Manufacturer, **Mode-AL Limited**. B-Tech and Mode-AL had collaborated on numerous occasions over the years, with Mode-AL producing premium AV furniture and mounting solutions for corporate and broadcast markets, their products complemented B-Tech's and vice versa. In late 2018, I entered negotiations with the management team at Mode-AL and by early 2019 was able to announce Mode-AL as a brand of B-Tech AV Mounts. Mode-AL products were integrated into the B-Tech portfolio and the Mode-AL customer base now had access to a far greater selection of solutions. access to a far greater selection of solutions.

In 2019 we expanded our network of B-Tech offices even further with the launch of **B-Tech Korea Co., Ltd**, in conjunction with our distribution partner there. Key to our growth was offering a high level of local service and it was especially important to have this in Korea given our developing relationships with the screen manufacturers there.

Closer to home, under the stewardship of *Jon Alway* and *Steven Verdood*, our long-established European operations, which are run from our Brussels HQ, have benefitted from the turmoil caused by Brexit, with our market penetration and brand awareness continuing to grow at staggering rates across the continent. During the past year we have tripled our on-site warehousing capacity and office space, along with a new showroom and training facility more than double the size of our previous one.



Proud and humbled after B-Tech wins Manufacturer of the Year at the AV Awards

Integrated Systems Europe

Europe's No.1 show for professional AV and electronic systems integration



From simple shell schemes to epic one week builds. The scale of B-Tech exhibition booths has increased dramatically over the last 50 years



Mode-AL

A B-TECH AV MOUNTS BRAND



B-Tech acquires Mode-AL Display Engineering in 2019



A true global presence. In 2021 B-Tech sold to over 65 countries and have 10 global distribution centres worldwide

THE NEXT 50 YEARS...

As B-Tech continues through its 50th year and our Golden Anniversary, I can honestly say the Company has never been in a better position. We have continued to expand the range of professional mounting solutions including those for dvLED panels by using System X. We have increased our offerings to include custom designs utilising our in-house design, engineering and production capabilities not just in the UK, but also in Belgium, China and the USA to produce low volume production runs. We have our own companies in China and Vietnam that oversee the production processes there, as well as dealing with supply chain management including warehousing. We have an in-house marketing team that produces everything including our 200+ page catalogue, website, social media content, product specification sheets, trade show booths (including those for ISE and InfoComm), and multilingual marketing support.

Today, the **B-Tech International Group** consists of ten operations (more details on pages 18-19). In 2021, B-Tech sold to over 65 countries around the world and it amazes me to see our teams gaining sales in far-reaching locations such as Nepal, Brunei, Jamaica and Chile. This is not intended as a brag. This is what B-Tech is today. This shows how far we have come since my father set off with his van and £500.

B-Tech has truly become International and never has our motto of 'Local Service on a Global Scale' been more pertinent or accurate.

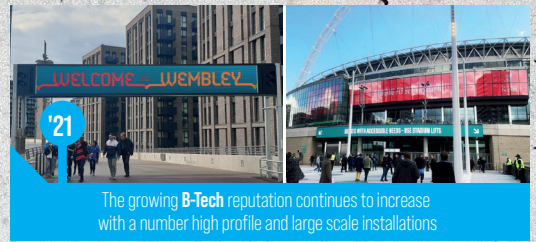
To be here today, 23 years after I joined, steering B-Tech into our 50th anniversary year with a business that is as strong as it has ever been, is something I am incredibly proud of. To see B-Tech products being chosen for such a variety of installs around the world is incredible, and many are connected with some of my other passions, namely rugby and football. To go to *Wembley Stadium* for the Euro 2020 finals knowing our mounts were supporting the external LG LED displays made me incredibly proud. As you can see, this success has not come overnight. Our agility in strategy has been key in this, but it would not have been possible without the people who have been part of this wonderful B-Tech journey. There are too many names that I have not had the space to include in this abridged history, and apologies to those I haven't mentioned. **No one who has contributed to B-Tech's story over the past 50 years has been forgotten.**

Although our history and heritage is great to look back and reflect upon, and as Jerry Garcia sang, "lately it occurs to me, what a long strange trip it's been", most importantly I am pleased to see a new generation of B-Techians coming through the ranks. Having a company that can offer chances to those with the right mindset, the right personality and the right moral compass is an important factor and an achievement that I am most proud of.

This next generation of B-Techians is bringing new ideas and boundless energy to the Company and I am sure will take B-Tech to the next level. It will be exciting to see what the next 50 years hold for B-Tech!

Matt Bennett

Chairman & CEO B-Tech International Group



The growing B-Tech reputation continues to increase with a number high profile and large scale installations



B-Tech promotions & advertising in different languages Targeting the local market with multi-lingual support



The ever expanding B-Tech team, B-Tech at ISE in Amsterdam



B-TECH AV MOUNTS

PROFESSIONAL AUDIO VISUAL MOUNTING SOLUTIONS



TO FIND YOUR LOCAL B-TECH OFFICE VISIT:
WWW.BTECHAVMOUNTS.COM/CONTACT-US



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BHB-TECH-2022-V1-230222-ENG

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