

Felix de la Cruz - Founder & Manuel de la Cruz - President and CEO, M&N Electronics



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Felix and Manuel de la Cruz of M&N Electronics discuss the company's evolution over the years and its commitment to becoming the leading provider of industrial equipment in Puerto Rico. They highlight the company's focus on customer service, growth opportunities in the local pharmaceutical sector, and expansion into new markets, as well as their vision for Puerto Rico's role in the global life sciences industry.

Having founded M&N Electronics over four decades ago, how have you seen Puerto Rico's life science and pharmaceutical industry develop over the years?

Felix de la Cruz (FdC): M&N Electronics has been in business for over 40 years, primarily supplying equipment and logistics for loading docks and manufacturing in Puerto Rico. Our vision has always been to ensure customer satisfaction by providing the best products on the market. Over the years, we have built a strong team, including personnel focused on service and sales, as well as managers who oversee the business operations in these areas.

Puerto Rico is currently in a position where there is a renewed focus on expanding pharmaceutical facilities, and we are eager to grow alongside this expansion. Many businesses that once left the island are now returning with new opportunities, particularly from the U.S., which provides us with a promising chance for growth.

Since I founded the business in 1987, I have witnessed the pharmaceutical industry in Puerto Rico shift significantly. Over the years, we have seen many periods of growth, but also challenges, with even some companies leaving the island. However, Puerto Rico is now at the forefront of growth again, especially with government support for expanding facilities and creating more business opportunities. We are committed to increasing our workforce and expanding our operations as we move forward. I believe that 2025 will be a pivotal year for Puerto Rico with many opportunities on the horizon.

Could you explain how you identified the core business of M&N Electronics and chose this particular niche in the market?

FdIC: We initially entered the industrial door business by securing exclusive products from companies in the U.S., including locations in states like Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Canada. We began supplying and installing doors and equipment for material handling. After a few years, we experienced a downturn in business as many companies left the market. However, the door business has become a strong opportunity again, particularly within the pharmaceutical industry. Manufacturing and supplying the specific doors they need has allowed us to meet customer demands and ensure satisfaction.

Our core business now revolves around doors and safety equipment for warehouses, including loading dock equipment and safety barriers. We ensure that all our products comply with OSHA and DHS regulations, which is critical for maintaining safety standards in these environments.

In 2019, M&N Electronics controlled 60% of the Puerto Rican market, primarily serving major pharmaceutical companies. How has the company's coverage and service offering evolved since then?

Manuel de la Cruz (MdIC): One of our key goals for 2025 is to expand our capacity not only here in Puerto Rico but also internationally. This is a journey which we have already started, and we are in the process of setting up a new facility which will support our growth, allow us to expand further. As part of this expansion plan, we have already started supplying equipment to the Dominican Republic.

We have also received inquiries from countries like Costa Rica, where we were asked to supply equipment. However, we have referred those requests to our global representatives in those

regions. While there are many opportunities to expand into new markets, our primary focus remains on strengthening our operations in Puerto Rico and nurturing our existing relationships.

Additionally, we have expanded into servicing steel racks through a new product called Life Well, which we obtained from Dambutech, a manufacturer based in Canada. This is an exciting opportunity for us, and we are working on supplying new racks as part of our future growth.

Another important vertical in our business is logistics. We have a dedicated team of 65 technicians and installers, and we operate a fleet of about 45 trucks. We take pride in using our own personnel rather than subcontracting, which ensures that we maintain control over quality and service.

Despite Puerto Rico's manufacturing expertise, technological incentives, and strategic location, the island is still working to achieve global recognition as a strategic hub for the life science industry. Why do you think Puerto Rico has yet to reach a higher level of notoriety?

FdlC: Puerto Rico has faced several challenges that have held it back from achieving greater recognition as a strategic hub for the life sciences industry. One of the main issues has been the consistent problems with electricity, which have affected both businesses and customers. To address this, I believe the government needs to work more closely with clients and offer incentives to help drive Puerto Rico forward on the right track. If this happens, it will create better opportunities for the island.

I remember in the 1980s when Puerto Rico was a top destination for pharmaceutical companies, with many of them setting up operations here. I believe we still have a great opportunity to regain that momentum. With the new government, there seems to be a clear focus on improving Puerto Rico's global standing, and I am optimistic about what the future holds.

However, for this to become a reality, political parties must take a more active role in addressing Puerto Rico's challenges. The new government has a strong vision for positioning Puerto Rico on the global stage, and I see significant potential in the coming years. While recent growth has slowed due to political and infrastructure issues, I believe that with the right focus and decisive action, Puerto Rico can regain momentum and achieve long-term success, particularly in the year ahead and beyond.

Looking ahead, what are the key priorities and goals for M&N Electronics over the next five years? What motivates you and your team to continue driving this work forward?

FdIC: Our key priority at M&N Electronics is to become the number one company in Puerto Rico with a reputation for trust and reliability. We want the life science ecosystem to know that M&N is a solutions partner they can rely on.

MdIC: Our vision has always been centred on service first and sales second. That will continue to guide us as we move towards 2025. We believe that by focusing on excellent service, we naturally drive sales and build lasting relationships with our clients.

What motivates me and my team is the satisfaction of helping our clients and supporting them with new projects and installations. It is deeply rewarding to know that people rely on us for assistance and that we can provide them with the solutions they need.

FdIC: As a family-owned business, we value creating an environment where our employees are happy and have opportunities to grow within the company. Over the years, our team has become an extension of our family, and we remain committed to fostering a culture of respect, support, and growth.

What final message would you like to share with our global readers about M&N Electronics, Puerto Rico, and your vision for the future?

FdIC: I hope Puerto Rico will gain more global recognition in the coming years. I believe we can bring the pharmaceutical industry back to the level we saw in the 80s. Although there are challenges, I am confident we are on the right path to achieving this.

MdIC: To our industry peers and stakeholders in Puerto Rico's life science sector, I encourage everyone to stay focused on doing their best. We should not be looking sideways at competing against one another—instead, we should focus on our work and strive for excellence. By continuing to prioritise service and quality, we can help ensure that Puerto Rico gets the recognition it deserves as a competitive player in the global life sciences industry.

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