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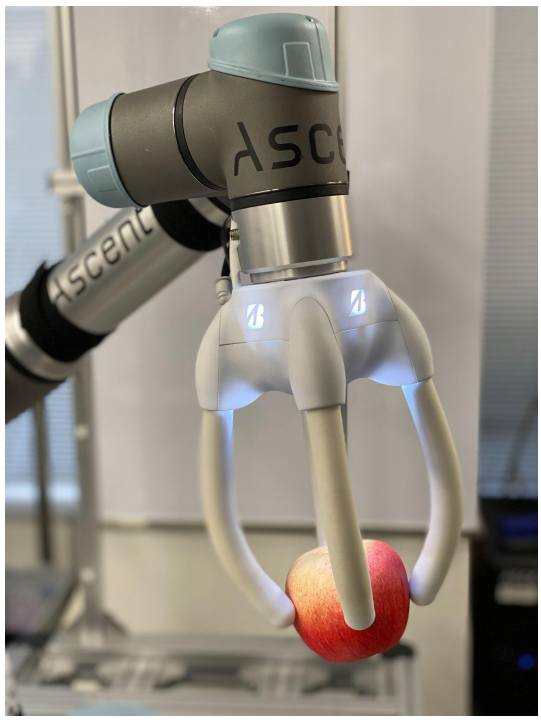
Press Release

Capital and Business Alliance with Bridgestone Corporation for a New Stage of Intelligent Robotics

Ascent Robotics and Bridgestone Agree to Develop New Intelligent Robotics System with Artificial Rubber Muscles[1]

Tokyo, Japan – Ascent Robotics Corporation ("Ascent Robotics") has entered into a capital and business alliance with Bridgestone Corporation ("Bridgestone") to realize a new piece-picking robot system[2] utilizing artificial rubber muscle robot hand developed by Bridgestone's internal venture "Softrobotics Ventures[3]".

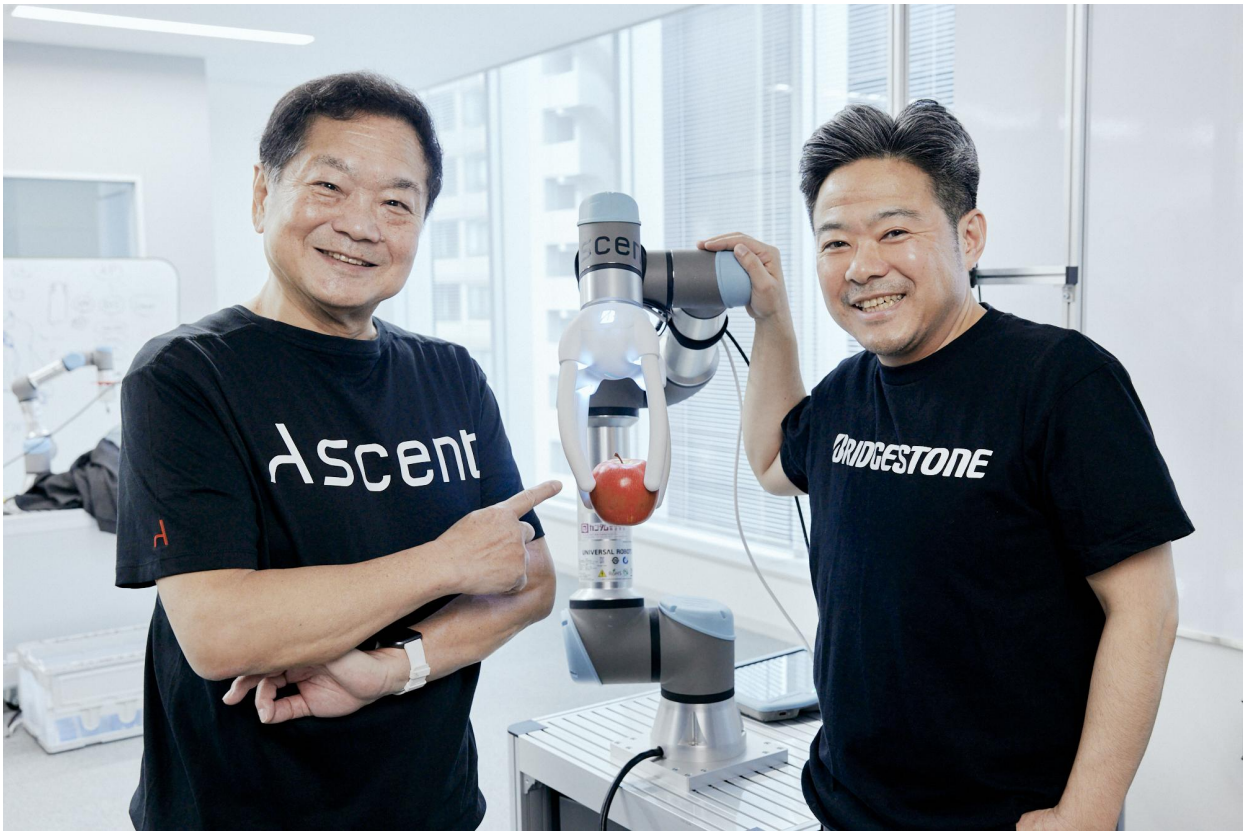


Ascent Robotics' AI solution will take care of the eye and brain functions of recognition and judgment, while Bridgestone's new soft robotic hand will take care of the human hand and finger functions. Combining the two will accelerate the development of new automation solutions in distribution warehouses and stores, where demand is expected to grow more. This new solution will expand the scope of automation to a wide range of items that have been difficult to handle with robots in the past, such as everyday household items, perishable and refrigerated food, and products of varying sizes, shapes, weights, and packaging.

[1] For more information on artificial rubber muscles (rubber actuators), please visit the following link: https://www.bridgestone.com/technology_innovation/rubber_actuator/

[2] A robot system that combines a soft robotic hand, AI software, and a camera to perform piece picking (the process of carrying out items one by one).

[3] For more information about Bridgestone Softrobotics Ventures, please visit the following link: https://www.bridgestone.co.jp/products/softrobotics/



Right, Norikazu Otoyama, CEO, Soft robotics Ventures, Bridgestone Corporation
Left, Ken Kutaragi, President, and CEO, Ascent Robotics, Inc.

Comments from Ken Kutaragi, Representative Director and CEO of Ascent Robotics Corporation

Ascent Robotics will develop intelligent robot systems utilizing state-of-the-art AI technology for further automation in the distribution and logistics fields, which are growing globally. We will also accelerate our efforts in various sensing technologies for the "Digital Twin Era," which is rapidly revitalizing the market[4].

To respond flexibly to the various distribution and logistics requirements, more than conventional robots that only perform routine and repetitive tasks are needed. Such challenges require a group of intelligent robots that can flexibly handle various objects and operate autonomously in cooperation with human operators according to the environment.

[4] For more information about Ascent Robotics' solutions for the digital twin era, please visit the following link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gd-l5xz3Jtk

By taking advantage of the flexible yet firm gripping characteristics of Softrobotics Ventures' robot hand, Ascent Robotics will be able to provide solutions for irregularly shaped perishable foods and refrigerated/frozen products, which have been challenging to apply in the past.
We look forward to expanding the range of applications for Ascent Robotics' AI solutions.

Comments from Norikazu Otoyama, CEO of Softrobotics Ventures, Inc.

The capital and business alliance with Ascent Robotics, which possesses unique AI technology, is a significant step toward the launch of our soft robotics business. Through co-creation with Ascent Robotics, we aim to commercialize soft robotics that can respond reactively to situations by utilizing the flexibility of rubber.

In addition, the newly launched internal venture "Softrobotics Ventures" is taking on the challenge of operationalization by talent ambitious to create a new business from zero. Through these efforts, we will realize a contemporary society in which soft robotics can accompany and support people's daily lives.

About Bridgestone Corporation

Head office: 1-1, Kyobashi 3-chome, Chuo-ku, Tokyo
Representative: Shuichi Ishibashi
Number of employees: 14,745 (as of December 31, 2021)
Business: Tire business, solution business, and diversified products business

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