

Key suppliers well represented in India

Mascot Engineering is among a select group of organisations representing leading international equipment and materials suppliers to the Indian and Sri Lankan glass manufacturing industry. John Wallis reports.

Once India lifted its import restrictions in the early 1990s, foreign production technology became more widely adopted at the factories of local glass manufacturers. For many Indian customers, sourcing international equipment and materials was an exciting if daunting and costly opportunity, in many cases requiring a fundamentally different management philosophy, along with the full support of international suppliers and trustworthy local representatives.

Established in 1969, initially to market oil-fired equipment, blowers, pumps, heaters, burners and filters, Mumbai-based Mascot Engineering Co represents several of the glass industry's key suppliers, building an excellent reputation for service and support since entering the market during the mid-1980s. Owner and President, Mohan Lalvani has run the business since day one, having previously worked in a similar role for local company, Blue Star.

At that time, Mumbai was home to many of the country's leading glassmakers, although subsequently, all but Vitrum have either closed or left the city for other parts of Western India. In line with local industrial expansion, a workforce of two has increased to more than 40, servicing not only the Indian and Sri Lankan glass industry but also supplying chemicals to the personal and health care sector. Representing such organisations as Dow Corning, Dow Chemicals, Croda, Honeywell Biospectrum and Buhler,



Furnace inauguration at Ceylon Glass, Sri Lanka.

the life sciences division is similar in terms of size and turnover to glass. Mohan Lalvani's son, Mohit concentrates on the Personal & Health Care Division but is also involved in the glass business.

SELECTIVE APPROACH

Mascot Engineering's first glass industry principal was the German refractory supplier Dyko, later taken over by Vesuvius and subsequently acquired by Germany-based P-D Refractories. P-D's acquisitions also include Dr C Otto, Premier and Wetro. The association began on an unofficial basis in the mid-1970s but it was not until 1980 that Mohan took over the agency on a full-time basis.

The relationship prospered, giving other international suppliers the confidence to set up similar arrangements, including the then independent EME Maschinenfabrik Clasen for batch plant and cullet handling equipment.

"From the beginning, I decided to avoid simply picking up more and more agencies" Mohan Lalvani recalls. "I am very selective and only work with those I consider to be the very best... so my customers know that what they buy from me – in whatever area – will be the highest quality and not junk!"

According to Mohan, Mascot Engineering could have 20 or more agencies but has avoided adopting >



GLASSPEX India 2009 - left to right: Dirk Elbers (Lord Mayor of Düsseldorf), Alexander Sorg (Managing Partner, Nikolaus Sorg), Dr Rainer Hauk (Joint Managing Director, EME), Werner M Dornscheidt (President and CEO, Messe Düsseldorf) and Mohan Lalvani (President, Mascot Engineering).

the attitude "give me what you have and I'll sell it!"

MULTI-NATIONAL PRINCIPALS

Primarily but not exclusively, the company's glass industry principals are heavily involved in the container sector. Suppliers of speciality ceramics and refractories include the international multi-national organisations, German company Fastner and Hungary's Motim.

Leading supplier of melting furnaces and conditioning systems, Nikolaus Sorg has been represented for the past decade and has achieved considerable success in the Indian market; sister company EME is also still represented.

Also from Germany are IS machinery builder GPS Glasproduktions-Service, annealing lehr specialist Ernst Pennekamp and Waltec Maschinen, supplier of feeders, press and spinning equipment.

Netherlands-based Rosario Productie and Italy's Fermac specialise in decorating machinery while Imaca, also from the Netherlands, produces coating equipment. In addition, under the terms of a recently concluded agreement, Mascot Engineering represents Gedvelop, believing the Swedish company's hot end analysis, measurement and control equipment could revolutionise the Indian glass industry in 2010.

Finnish concern, Glassrobots has also been successful in the market through the efforts of Mascot, supplying an automotive glass bending furnace to Asahi.

INDUSTRY AFFILIATION

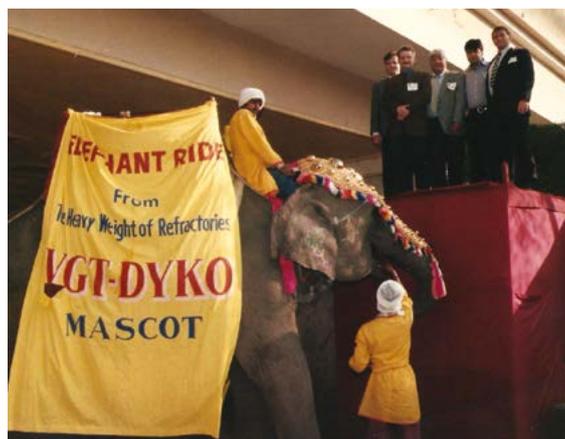
Mohan Lalvani is a proactive and enthusiastic supporter of the All India Glass Manufacturers Federation. Despite being a supplier and not a glass producer, he is invited to the AIGMF's quarterly Executive Committee meetings and is the current Editor of *KANCH* magazine.

He has also been a member of the Organising Committee for every AIGMF-supported exhibition held in India since 1995. Most recently, this included GLASSPEX India 2009, organised by Messe Düsseldorf, which Mohan described as "an overwhelming experience compared to previous exhibitions, which were more homely, cosy and fitted the Indian glass industry culture."

INDUSTRY PERCEPTIONS

"Prior to 1991, if the Government identified a company making a machine in India, you were not allowed to import one" Mohan recalls "so the change was a critical stepping stone for the Indian glass industry and the local economy generally." Subsequently, the majority of equipment is acquired from abroad, restricting opportunities for locally made furnaces and machines.

"Take the largest Indian group, HNG, for example, who now buys furnaces and machines from Europe and the USA and its refractories from France and Germany. I cannot see this supply chain changing in the future because it should be remembered that India's glass industry is still relatively small."



Mascot played a prominent role in earlier glass events in India.

Today, India makes between 5000 and 6000 tonnes of container glass daily, less than several, much smaller European countries.

SOLAR GLASS

Mohan Lalvani sees solar glass as a tremendous growth opportunity for the Indian market. "The recent *Solar Production Worldwide* section of *Glass Worldwide* was very useful and I have circulated it to many people to show the importance of the solar industry."

It is anticipated that Mascot Engineering will represent several companies in this market, alongside the likes of Sorg and Rurex, who are already active. According to a recent report in the *Times of India*, the country hopes to become a solar 'super power' within four years, in particular with solar systems lighting up more than 9000 villages. "There will be major investments, with renewable energy in India being pushed forward in a really big way."

The local glass container sector is also expected to grow significantly, as lifestyles improve and alcohol consumption levels increase. "In addition, I expect lightweight bottles to play an increasingly important role in the future" concludes Mohan Lalvani, who anticipates a good future for the Indian glass industry and Mascot Engineering. ■



Gedvelop, Mascot's latest glass division principal, at GLASSPEX India 2009.



Pennekamp's stand at GLASSPEX India 2009.

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