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Technology & Innovation: Empowering the Channels of Power

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better visibility of material and provide a firm commitment to the customers against their orders. It is also helpful in tracing a particular consignment that has been sent to the customer and taking any necessary

actions as and when required. This has helped to improve customer sentiment towards our brand.

We are also working on data analytics and visualization to improve our processes and systems.

Under visualization, we are using Tableau dashboards for the majority of our reports and we are using insights gained from the same to take necessary steps towards achieving our goals.



Mr. Neeraj Kochhar, Chairman and Managing Director, Viraj Profiles Ltd.

Viraj Profiles: Customising Offerings as per Customer Demand

“
As part of our commitment to ensure a seamless experience for our customers across more than 96 countries, we have recently deployed new ERP software to improve our delivery system and efficient use of the resources. The system encompasses all the activities starting from sourcing of scrap up to the last mile delivery of the products.
 ”

Wire & Cable India: Please highlight technology and quality development or up-gradation that recently took place.

Neeraj Kochhar: Viraj has always been driven by innovation and timely adaptation to the changing market and demand. Our thrust upon innovation is driven by new technologies, changing consumer demands, and other forces like change in the global economic scenario. The company has made sizable investments in creating a robust infrastructure while strengthening the existing one. As part of our commitment to ensure a seamless experience for our customers across more than 96 countries, we have recently deployed new ERP software to improve our delivery system and efficient use of the resources. The system encompasses all the activities starting from

sourcing of scrap up to the last mile delivery of the products.

On the manufacturing technology front, we recently started the HOT trial of our new straightening and shearing machine specifically for our profile range of products. The technology installed by Danieli Group (Italy) offers flawless performance at a much better speed and is equipped to handle up to 800 mm wide angles, channels and flats. The project just got kicked off but going forward, it will surely transform the way we manufacture products and will also help us in optimising our speed of manufacturing and delivery.

WCI: What have you been doing to foster innovation and R&D at your workplace?

NK: At Viraj, we follow an open door policy vertically as well as

laterally. We have created an atmosphere conducive to innovation and where employees feel free to express their thoughts, ideas and concerns with their teams, colleagues as well as seniors. Our approach has always been customer-centric and thus, our pursuit for innovation is always fuelled by our quest for customer excellence. Our R&D department is constantly exploring new ways of solving a problem. Over the years, this has helped us in customising our product offerings as per the customer demand and also maintaining our leadership position in the global market.

At Viraj, we have also formed a special cell comprising of engineers who are fresh out of college and a mix of middle management and senior management staff from various departments. The core



function of this department is to focus on new product development, cost optimisation, innovative packaging solutions, data analytics, etc. This methodology has helped us in looking at the manufacturing process in a completely new light. Access to advanced data analytics has improved our data-driven decision-making capabilities.

WCI: *What is your technology and business roadmap for the coming times?*

NK: Embracing new technology is

inevitable for sustainable business operation and the stainless steel industry is no exception. The stainless steel industry is already lagging behind other industries when it comes to technological transformation. These challenges have only been exacerbated owing to the pandemic and the changes in the global market. On the brighter side, the pandemic has also taught us to focus on building a more agile work culture and be future-ready to tackle any challenge head-on.

Agility does not mean allowing

people to do what they want to do, rather it has to be linked to the ability of the organisation to reconfigure people's strategies, resources and structures to the most value-creating opportunities. Having said that, we also understand that achieving this can take a longer period of time and it's a gradual process. Going forward, Viraj aims to earmark a significant portion of its expenditure on innovation and R&D. We already have a couple of projects in the pipeline and by the end of this calendar year, we should be able to share more updates on this.



Mr. Srikanth Chakravarthy, Vice President Global Strategy – RR, Managing Director India, Bekaert

Wire & Cable India: *Please highlight technology and quality development or upgradation that recently took place.*

Srikanth Chakravarthy: Bekaert is a world market and technology leader in steel wire transformation and coating technologies. We recently received the 'Tire Manufacturing Innovation of the Year Award' for BeCoFree, a solution that allows tire makers to remove cobalt completely from the tire while using a steel cord. This is a significant innovation as it

Bekaert: Bringing in Digitalisation and CO₂ Reduction to Create Enhanced Customer Experience

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We recently received the ‘Tire Manufacturing Innovation of the Year Award’ for BeCoFree, a solution that allows tire makers to remove cobalt completely from the tire while using a steel cord. This is a significant innovation as it addresses both the challenge of performance and sustainability together.
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WCI: *What have you been doing to foster innovation and R&D at your workplace?*

SC: We see engagement with customers and suppliers as vital to innovation. Co-creation allows for much greater possibilities than creation alone, hence we engage heavily through the supply chain to find solutions that address current

and future needs. Behind this, we continuously invest in our capabilities and talents and have been able to attract strong talent through various levels in the organisation that can stimulate the change needed.

To begin with, we always challenge the traditional ways of doing things, and apply boundary-less thinking to ideate, within a structured framework that takes us all the way from idea to industrialisation through various stage gates.



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